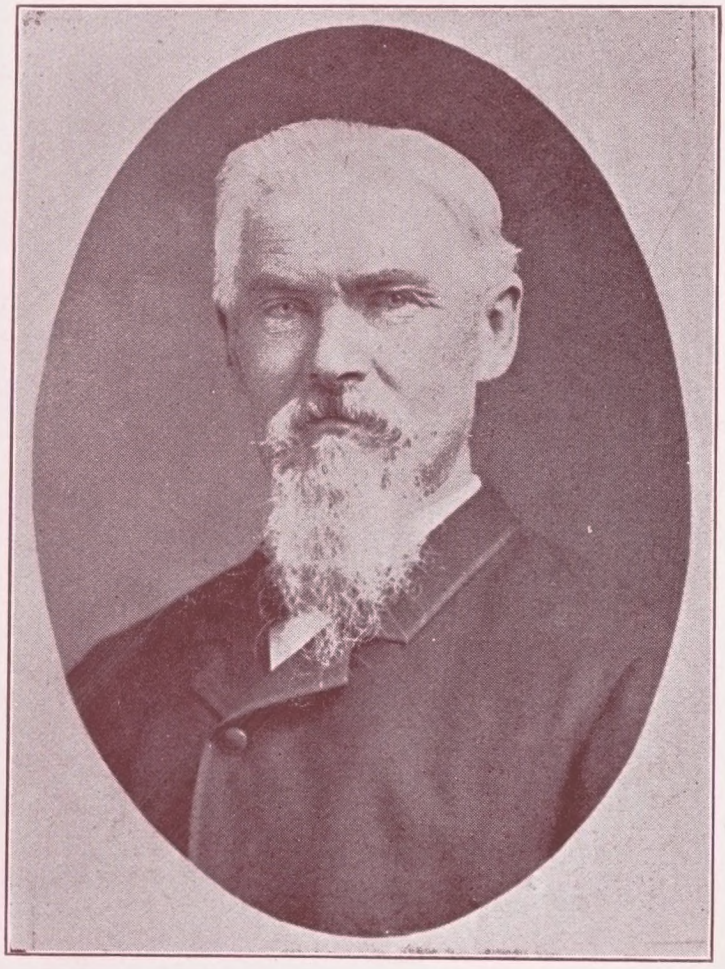
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PROF. ALEXANDER WERTHEIM, A. M.

Humorous Tales

and

Ghost Stories.

BY ALEXANDER WERTHEIM, A.M.

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CONTENTS.

	Page
The Piano Prince	5
Professor Chimborazo's Lectures	56
Judge Slowbagger	87
Sylvester Stromeyer	102
Franz Kinkelbach	135
The Fatal Postal Card	140
A New Orleans Auction Room	144
A Provoking Calamity	156
The Italian Bandit Chief, Giuseppo Caramboli	162
The Maiden Grandmother	169
Bill Fogey	178
A Practical Course in Law	188
Caspar Langnas	194
Hans Schnabelwitz	201
Alfred Buchfink	208
The White Calf	213
A Dancing Ghost	228
An Obliging Ghost	236

HUMOROUS TALES AND GHOST STORIES.

THE PIANO PRINCE.

I.

It was the 3d of August, 1839. The clock on the market place at the little town of N. in Prussia had struck the hour of 10 A. M., and the notables of the town had assembled to celebrate the anniversary of the King's birthday by talking, drinking beer and smoking their long pipes.

They consisted of Baron von Duselwitz, a Privy councilor; Julius Bellmann, a banker; Justus Fuchs, the town judge; Alfred Lerche, the town doctor, and Thomas Donnerkeil, the Comptroller of Taxes; and they had chosen as a place of meeting the reception room at the hotel of the Golden Monkey, where we find them seated around an oaken table.

All except Donnerkeil, who was a man of twenty-seven, were past the prime of life, and all except him were stanch supporters of the reigning King.

It was dangerous in those days in monarch-ridden Prussia for a public officer to stay away from such celebrations, and so we see young Donnerkeil seated among the rest.

The room has been decorated for the occasion with garlands and flowers, and above a portrait of the King, Frederick William the Third, a laurel crown is fastened to the wall. Beneath the portrait a bench is placed, with a keg of beer on tap, and a waiter boy sitting by its side. His office is to fill glasses and see to it that the thirst of the patriots, which is always great, receives his prompt attention.

Of course the first glass must be dedicated to the health of the King; and so the Privy councilor, as the oldest member of the company, rises with glass in hand, an example followed by the rest, and addresses his companions as follows: "Gentlemen, my heart throbs with patriotic feelings when I look at the portrait of His Majesty, our gracious King, whose birthday we are here to celebrate in a becoming manner.

"Let us wish that His Majesty may continue his blessed reign over our country for many years to

come, and let us empty our glasses in token of our loyal wishes for his health. Long live the King! Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

All with the exception of Donnerkeil join in the hurrah, after which they empty their glasses and sit down, resuming the smoking of their pipes, while the boy goes to refill the glasses.

A short lull ensues; then Donnerkeil asks the question: "How old is the King to-day?" To which the Privy councilor answers: "Sixty-nine years. This makes him an old man now; but I have known him when he was young and handsome. It was in 1795 when his first son, our illustrious crown prince, was born. The baptism was performed in the dome church of Berlin; and after it a great banquet was given by the King, to which monarchs and princes had been invited and all our great generals had been commanded to attend. The banquet took place in the great sala of the royal castle; and I, being a page at court, had to assist in filling the glasses on the table. I was a lad of eighteen then, and much frightened by the presence of so many illustrious persons. So when I came to fill the glass of the King, my hand began to shake so violently that I nearly dropped the bottle. The King saw it, and smiling graciously, said: 'Fear not, my son; I do not bite.' This you will admit was kind of him, and

I have always been proud of it that His Majesty spoke to me."

A smile passes over Donnerkeil's face at the last words of the Privy councilor, and he says:

"There are other people who cherish the same pride. I read of a peasant who boasted that the King had spoken to him, and when he was asked how it happened he said: 'His Majesty came riding along a foot-path on which I walked, and called out to me: "Get out of the way, you donkey."' "

The conversation is here interrupted by Mr. Rudolph Lambach, the burgomaster of the town, who brings the intelligence that the first regular passenger train from Berlin is to reach the town in a quarter of an hour, and that he is going to receive the guests at the depot and direct them to the Golden Monkey. "You, as the leading men of the town," he adds, "I beg to remain here and receive them in a proper manner."

Having delivered his message, the burgomaster drinks a glass of beer and hurries from the room.

When he has left a commotion ensues among the members of the company, all of whom with the exception of Donnerkeil, spring to their feet, put their pipes away, tear open doors and windows, and use handkerchiefs, hats and coat-tails to drive out the smoke. After that they rush to

the mirrors of the room to arrange their hair and neckties; and finally they go back to the table, settle down on their chairs and look dignified.

The old Privy councilor seems to have become exhausted by these various exertions, for he draws a long breath and says: "So, now let them come; we are prepared to receive them in a decent manner." To which Donnerkeil caustically replies: "Oh, I am prepared to receive His Anointed Majesty himself, if he should happen to be among the guests, and I am not afraid that he will bite me, as they say he has not a single tooth in his mouth."

This remark is received with general disapprobation and rebuked by Mr. Fuchs, the town judge, with the words: "Young man, you are facetious. Don't you know that you may be prosecuted for speaking irreverently of the King?"

Donnerkeil is going to reply, but is prevented by the sound of the steam whistle announcing the arriving train. All now rush to the windows to see the coming guests.

"I hear the rattling of the cars. Now the train stops," says the doctor.

"I hear the rolling of carriage wheels!" cries the judge.

"And I see a solitary cab coming this way," says Mr. Donnerkeil.

"The cab contains a man with a high white hat on his head," remarks the doctor.

"And with long flaxen locks dangling down upon his shoulders. I wonder what kind of an animal he is," says Donnerkeil.

"Hush! the cab stops at the gate and I see the landlord going to receive the stranger. Now he steps out from the cab!" cries the judge.

"Rather say he crawls out," says Donnerkeil.

"What a tall man! and what a commanding air he has!" exclaims Mr. Bellmann.

"He is dressed after the latest fashion with snout-shaped boots on his feet and leather straps sewed to his pantaloons and drawn around the soles of the boots. Just look how tight the pantaloons are!" cries the doctor.

"Now the landlord bows to him and invites him to the house," remarks Mr. Bellmann.

"They are coming! See how majestically the stranger walks! He gives the landlord an order and I see the latter go back to the gate!" cries the Privy councilor.

"I heard the order. It was 'pay cab!' Probably the fellow has no money to pay the fare himself," says Mr. Donnerkeil.

"The landlord has come back, and they are entering the house. Let us front the door and receive the stranger with a bow," suggests the judge.

"I shall do nothing of the kind; I remain where I am!" replied young Donnerkeil.

"Hush! I hear the landlord invite him to enter the reception room. Now let us take the proper attitude and look respectful," says the judge.

"Oh, what a set of miserable fools! And these men call themselves the leaders of the town! I wish the long-haired fellow would kick them!" says Mr. Donnerkeil to himself, and turns away in disgust.

II.

A momcnt after the scene described the door opens and the stranger steps into the room.

He is a powerful man of thirty-five and dressed as described by the members of the company.

He takes no notice of the respectfully bowing members, but strides proudly to a side table, puts down his hat upon it, and then throws himself negligently into an arm-chair. Here he crosses his legs, looks up at the ceiling, and indulges in a loud protracted yawn.

The crest-fallen members sneak back to their chairs, while Donnerkeil utters a mocking laugh, goes to relight his pipe, and then joins them.

After a while the landlord, Mr. Albert Schlau,

attired in shirt sleeves and slippers, with a white apron tied around his waist, enters the room and steps up to the stranger.

The two then have the following discourse:

"If it please Your Highness, I come to beg for your orders."

"Good! First story vacant?"

"I am sorry to say it is not. It is occupied by His Grace the Count of Catchmarofski.

"But the second story is vacant and at Your Highness's command."

"Will not do! Reside first story only! Never take another! Price no matter!"

"But Your Highness will find the rooms in the second story airy and comfortable."

"Stop! Will hear no more! Other hotels in town?"

"Only one."

"Fine rooms there?"

"Yes."

"Great building?"

"There are four buildings forming a square, with a courtyard in the middle."

"Name of the hotel?"

"The Howling Dog."

"Queer name!"

"Yes, but very appropriate."

"Why?"

"Well, there is a story connected with it. Does Your Highness wish to hear it?"

"Yes; what is it?"

"The hotel was built by a foolish fellow from Berlin who came here possessing lots of money. He lived like a king until one morning he was found dead in his bed. When his will was opened it was found that he had bequeathed the hotel to its present owner under one of the strangest conditions in the world."

"You know that condition?"

"Yes; it imposed on the landlord the obligation to keep constantly a howling dog tied in the middle of the yard into which all the doors and windows of the hotel rooms open."

"Foolish condition! And what was the object?"

"To keep the guests in good humor for twenty-four hours every day."

"Has the hotel guests?"

"Yes, plenty."

"And they like the howling of the dog?"

"They do. I spoke with some of them and they find it most refreshing.

"Does Your Highness wish to go there?"

"No, never! Going to examine second story. Will take it if convenient."

"That is precisely what I always thought. Now will Your Highness please to follow me?"

Both the landlord and the stranger hereupon leave the room. The company look at each other in silence. Then Donnerkeil sets up a roaring laughter.

III.

While the company are still in meditation about the mysterious stranger, the door opens and the burgomaster enters, calling loudly: "A kingdom for a glass of beer! I am completely fagged out and thirsty like a sporting dog!" (Turning to the boy) "Fill me a glass quick!" (Then drinking, wiping his mouth, and stroking his belly) "So, now I feel more like a human being! I tell you, gentlemen, there is nothing better in this world than a good glass of beer fresh from the tap. (Sitting down.) But what have you done with that gentleman from Berlin I sent here? Did you receive him in a proper manner?"

The question is answered by Mr. Donnerkeil, who says: "Our friends here bowed deeply enough before him when he entered the room, but the fellow did not take the least notice of them. He threw himself boisterously into an arm-chair,

crossed his long legs and gaped like a sleepy pig. The man is an ill-bred boor or rogue and should be treated as such!"

This reply is not approved by the Privy councilor, and he says sharply: "Hush, sir! and let older people speak who have more experience and a better knowledge of men.

"I have mingled with the higher classes of society and thus had the opportunity of studying their bearing and manners.

"This enables me to tell at a glance whether a man is of low or noble origin. There is an undefinable something in a nobleman which will escape the vulgar sight, but is easily detected by a member of his class.

"Now, I have observed the gentleman closely, and you may take my word for it that he possesses that undefinable something, and is either a prince, a duke or some other great pillar of the state."

Mr. Donnerkeil listens to these words with an ironic smile, and says: "Sir, the future will show whether your noble or my vulgar sight has judged the man correctly. For the present, I would swear to it that he is neither a prince, a duke, nor other rotten pillar of the state, but abundantly possesses that easily definable something which characterizes the bloated artist or fool and frequently the insolent churl or knave."

This declaration arouses the judge, who thinks it opportune to administer another rebuke to his adversary of before. He therefore removes the pipe from his mouth and says sternly: "Young man, you are immodest in contradicting the maturer views of your elders, and decidedly bold in attacking the character of a gentleman who evidently belongs to the higher or wealthy classes.

"It behooves a modest youth to respect the wiser opinions of his seniors, and it is the duty of every good citizen to honor the King and refrain from criticising the bearing of his superiors in rank and fortune."

Here Donnerkeil seems to lose his temper. He looks at the judge contemptuously, and replies with force: "You are in error, sir, if you consider wisdom to be the exclusive attribute of the aged, and you are obviously wrong in conceding to rank and wealth the lawful privilege of insolence. I reject your rebuke as undeserved and entirely out of place, and give you my word of honor that no power on earth shall ever compel me to call black white and cowardly cringe before persons of rank or wealth!"

The debate has now become hot, and so the burgomaster, who is ever ready to restore peace when the tranquil enjoyment of a smoke and a good glass of beer is jeopardized, thinks it time to

interfere. He therefore knocks his glass on the table and says: "I neither had the time nor opportunity to form an opinion on the character, rank or possessions of the stranger, but I would bet a keg of beer that he has hair enough on his head to stuff a good-sized pillow. Hallo, boy! are you asleep? Quick fill the glasses and then go and bring me my pipe!"

The order is obeyed by the boy, and when all the glasses are filled, the burgomaster rises with his glass in hand, an example followed by the others, and speaks as follows: "Gentlemen, you paid your respect to the King by drinking his health. Now let us empty our glasses with our good wishes for our own health and an undisturbed companionship. May they last five hundred years!"

"Say mil anos, or a thousand years, as the Spaniards have it!" rejoins Mr. Donnerkeil.

All empty their glasses and sit down again, after which the burgomaster lights his pipe.

IV.

When tranquillity has thus been restored by the burgomaster, the company falls into a pleasant chat. This lasts till the door opens and the land-

lord enters the room. He is immediately attacked by questions about the stranger.

"Has he taken the rooms?" asks the judge.

"I bet you he has, and he has paid me in advance, too," replies the landlord.

"How much did he pay you?" asks Mr. Bellmann.

"Ten dollars for three days' board and lodging," is the answer.

"Do you know who he is?" asks Mr. Donnerkeil.

"Not yet."

"But you addressed him with 'Your Highness'?" To this the landlord smiles and says: "Well, sir, most men in this world are fools and prefer an empty title to an honest name. It pays to administer to their folly, as you shall see directly.

"You know old farmer Kesselmann; he is rich, but a consummate miser. Now, listen how I tackled him. He came to the bar of the hotel last Friday and asked for a glass of water. I brought it, and when he had gulped it down I politely asked him: 'Want some more, colonel?' He looked at me in surprise, then looked around at the crowd, and seeing some strangers among them, he assumed a military air, and said in a commanding voice: 'No! bring cigars and wine for all the persons present!'

"There were fifteen in the room and it cost the old man three dollars and a half, but he liked the title. The next time when he comes again I will call him 'general' and see what he will do.

"As to the stranger whom I addressed with 'Your Highness,' I am going to have him enter his name and title in the hotel book, and then will bring you the book that you may see for yourselves."

When the landlord has left the burgomaster goes to the keg of beer and lifts up one end of it.

He then gravely shakes his head and says: "Gentlemen, I find that the keg is nearly empty. The thing is serious and calls for our attention. You are at variance in your opinions on the stranger. Now, how would you like the suggestion to settle the question by betting a keg of beer and letting the losing party pay for it?"

"The idea is a capital one!" replies the Privy councilor, "and I consent to make the bet and stick to my opinion."

"I help you pay for the beer if you lose the bet," says Mr. Bellmann.

"And so will I!" cries the judge.

"And I accept the bet, and pay for the keg of beer alone, if my opinion on the stranger proves to be wrong," says Mr. Donnerkeil.

Upon this the burgomaster turns to Mr. Lerche,

and says: "Doctor, this lets us go out free on the beer, and so I propose to you that we pay for another pound of tobacco."

"The proposition is but just, and I accept it," is the doctor's ready reply.

These arrangements have scarcely been made when the door opens and the landlord steps in with the open hotel book. All the members make a rush for it and look at the entry.

"What a miserable scratching! It looks as if a turkey buzzard had written it with his claw!" cries Mr. Donnerkeil.

"Yes, the writing is coarse, but let me read it aloud," says the burgomaster.

All stand aside and listen, whereupon the burgomaster reads as follows:

"Carolus Haifisch, the greatest now living Piano Virtuoso, universally known as the Piano Prince."

"There! Didn't I tell you he was a bloated artist?" exclaims Mr. Donnerkeil.

"And didn't I tell you he was a prince?" replies the Privy councilor.

The burgomaster promptly stops the controversy by saying: "Gentlemen, you seem to be both right and that makes your wager a draw. So you better drop in and let us all pay for the beer and tobacco."

The proposition is accepted by both parties, whereupon the meeting is adjourned with the proviso to take up the birthday celebration again at three o'clock in the afternoon.

V.

We have to take our readers once more to the reception room of the Golden Monkey.

On the table stand a dozen glasses—some of them schooners—and the box of tobacco.

Soon the landlord enters with a keg of beer, which he places on the bench. Then he raises his apron, wipes his brow and indulges in the following soliloquy: "So, that will quench their thirst, which I dare say is not an easy matter! I wonder on what these people feed to create that tremendous taste for beer? It surely is not bran or hay, for that would make them crave for water. But, hush! I hear some one coming."

Soon the door opened and Mr. Donnerkeil enters the room. He looks about him, then steps up to the landlord and says: "I am glad to find you here alone, for I wish to speak with you about that long-haired stranger.

"You heard our remarks about him when we saw his miserable scratching in the book and

learned his foolish title. To me the thing was no surprise, but precisely what I had expected. I took the man for a fool or knave before he left the cab, but was opposed in this by the Privy councilor, who declared him to be a prince or duke.

"What! that man a prince or duke?" cries the landlord. "He is a blustering fraud and nothing else! A child can see that, and I would not trust him with a glass of beer."

"It gives me satisfaction to hear you express that opinion, but now the question arises, what does the man intend to do here? Will he give a concert?"

"He has not spoken to me about it, but I believe that this is what he came for, and he may have the big hall, if he pays for it in advance."

"I don't think the man is an artist. There is too much bombast about him. Still, if he were to give a concert I would go to see the fun. There are expert judges of music in this town, and among them the Privy councilor's daughter holds the first rank."

"And you would not dissuade her from going, would you?"

"No, I am resolved to meddle in the matter no more, but let others do just what they please."

"Exactly as I thought to act myself."

The conversation is here interrupted by the en-

trance of the Privy councilor, banker, town judge and doctor, all of whom go and take their seats at the table. Donnerkeil sits down with them, while the landlord turns and leaves the room.

When all are seated, the Privy councilor opens the conversation as follows:

"So, gentlemen, and this eminent genius has visited our town and decided to stay here for some time. They speak of the piano virtuoso Liszt saying that he plays only in capital cities. Well, let him do so, if he chooses; what do we care for Liszt —having the greatest living piano virtuoso in our town?"

"Yes, what is a Liszt compared with a man who is universally known as the Piano Prince? I would not give a penny now to hear him play," remarks the banker.

"Neither would I," asserts the judge.

"Are the gentlemen sure this *ne plus ultra* genius is going to play here? I asked the landlord about it, and he could tell me nothing," observes Mr. Donnerkeil.

"Oh, there can be no doubt. He engaged the second story of the hotel and paid for it in advance," cries the doctor.

"Yes, because the landlord would not trust him," replies Mr. Donnerkeil.

"It seems Mr. Donnerkeil would not like to hear

the gentleman play, as he might prove to be a fool or knave," remarks the judge ironically.

"You mistake my inclination, sir! I am anxious to hear him play, and offer to pay him double price if he turns out to be a knave," replies Mr. Donnerkeil sharply.

"Your offer is an empty boast, because the price is to be paid before the play begins, and nobody can tell what the artist will turn out to be!" retorts the judge in a passion.

It appears necessary to put a stop to the discussion, which threatens to become very hot, and so the Privy councilor says mildly: "Gentlemen, you waste your time in discussing the character of a man who shows all the traits and peculiarities of great artists, and is obviously neither a fool nor a knave. The question that presents itself is simply: Has he come to give a concert or not? and this can be easily ascertained by asking him."

"But were it not better to wait and see what he is going to do?" asks Mr. Donnerkeil.

"By no means!" interposes the judge; "my suggestion is that he be asked immediately, and this by Messrs. von Duselwitz and Bellmann, being the social leaders of the town."

"Accepted! Come, Mr. Bellmann, let us go to him at once!" cries the Privy councilor, rising.

"Yes, let us go," rejoins Mr. Bellmann.

Both gentlemen then leave the room, while the others step out to take a walk in the garden.

VI.

The scene which we are going to describe now occurs in an old-fashioned parlor. On a sofa reclines the Piano Prince Carolus Haifisch.

He is dressed in a long robe de chambre held together by a girdle adorned with hanging tassels. On his head he wears a velvet cap with a gold tassel hanging down, and his feet are encased in embroidered slippers. He is smoking a fine Turkish meerschaum pipe, from which he blows thick clouds, when a timid knock is heard at the door and the artist cries: "Come in!"

Soon the door opens and the Privy councilor and banker enter the room. They bow deeply and then remain standing at the door, looking respectfully at the artist.

The latter glances at them for some time indifferently, but then makes them a sign to approach. They do so and bow again.

Now the artist opens his mouth and puts to them the question, "Well, gents, what can I do for you?"

At this the Privy councilor assumes the postures

of an orator, raises his hand, and addresses the artist as follows:

"Sir, there are events in human life so momentous and rare that they should be recorded in golden letters and handed down as priceless treasures to posterity. Your coming to this town is one of these events.

"You are the greatest musical genius in the world, and we as social leaders of this town consider it our duty to welcome you to it, and offer you our humble services, if you should deem it not beneath your dignity to favor us with one of your stupendous musical performances. Please let us know whether you feel disposed to bestow that favor on our town, and receive the assurance that in *casu quo sic* we will accept it with grateful heart, and do our best to make the concert a brilliant success."

The Piano Prince listens to this harangue with the utmost indifference, and when it is finished he rises slowly from the sofa, steps to a spittoon and empties the ashes of his pipe into it. Then he refills the pipe, lights it, sits down again, and for some time seems completely absorbed in smoking. Finally he turns to his visitors and says in his abrupt manner: "Play only in capital cities. Concerts given in London, Paris, St. Petersburg. Ar-

rangements made in Berlin. Thence going to Vienna, Rome, Naples."

To this Mr. Bellmann replies: "But could you not make an exception in favor of our town? I assure you, sir, that it would be a pecuniary success. This gentleman and I have agreed to pay you fifty dollars apiece for our tickets, and there are many other people in this town who would pay a decent price to hear the greatest artist in the world."

Mr. Haifisch seems to reflect a moment, but then gravely shakes his head, and says: "Impossible! Would hurt my reputation. Would be detrimental to my fame."

By this response the Privy councilor's pride seems to be hurt, and he says with force: "I think it would not, sir! There are men of distinction living in this town, who have attended at the royal court in Berlin and have been spoken to by His Majesty, our gracious King."

The Piano Prince listens to him indifferently, and then says: "Will consider matter. Let you know later." After that he puts his pipe away, lies down on the sofa, and turns his back to his visitors. The latter then turn round and leave the room on tiptoe.

VII.

The Privy councilor and the banker seem absorbed in thought when they re-enter the reception room and go to their seats.

After a while the former says: "I think we conquered the scruples of our distinguished guest. Didn't you see the change in his mien when I mentioned the men of distinction who have been spoken to by the King?"

Mr. Bellmann seems bored by the constant harping on this subject and answers shortly: "I did not see that change; maybe it escaped my notice. But where are our friends?"

"I hear them coming," says the Privy councilor; and soon the judge, the doctor, and Mr. Donnerkeil make their reappearance at the room and go to take their seats.

This has been scarcely done when the door opens and the burgomaster and the landlord enter the room.

The burgomaster immediately seizes the word and says: "I beg your pardon, gentlemen, for being late again. There was a drunken man to be lodged in jail, and as we have but one policeman, I had to lend a helping hand.

"It was an ugly job, and I say it is a sin and

a shame for a man to be immoderate in drinking!" Then suddenly turning to the boy who is going to fill a glass for him, he cries aloud: "Hallo, boy! don't fill that small glass for me; bring me a schooner!"

The command is obeyed, whereupon the burgomaster drinks and asks the question: "But what about the stranger?"

"Mr. Bellmann and I have just come back from him, and I think he will give us a concert," answers the Privy councilor contentedly.

"Did he receive you in a courteous manner?" asked Mr. Donnerkeil. To which the Privy councilor responds: "He received us as men of genius will receive their fellowmen."

The reply is unsatisfactory, and Mr. Donnerkeil says sharply: "You omit to answer the question, sir! There are gentlemen and clowns among the men of genius, and I should not wonder if this man had shown the clown."

The conversation is here interrupted by the sudden appearance of the Piano Prince, who, turning to the landlord, thrusts out the question: "Music band in town?" The answer being affirmative, he says in a commanding voice: "Send for kettle drummer of band and show him up to me!" and then steps proudly out, followed by the landlord.

All are astonished and the doctor cries: "Well,

this is strange. What does he want the kettle drummer for?"

"To accompany his play on the piano, I guess," replies Mr. Donnerkeil, dryly.

"Do you know the kettle drummer? What kind of man is he?" asks the doctor.

"Yes, I know him," answers Donnerkeil. "He is a jolly fellow, and much liked by the other members of the band. The other day they played at a ball given by Hampelman, the brewer. The kettle drummer happened to beat a hole into his drum just while the brewer and his old fat wife were dancing a minuet. There stood a tin basin close at hand, and the kettle drummer being a man of quick resolve, promptly seized it and used it as a drum. The noise was exhilarating and made the guests cry bravo."

"Did not the brewer and his wife stop dancing when they heard the beating of the basin?" asks the doctor.

"No," replies Donnerkeil; "they did not notice the change. They were so much absorbed in the intricacies of the minuet that they danced on till the old wife lost her breath and hung out her tongue."

"Is the kettle drummer married?" asks the doctor again. To which Donnerkeil answers: "No, he is not. They say he once eloped with the young

wife of an old farmer, who seized a shotgun, mounted a mule, and followed them.

"The mule was stubborn, as mules generally are, and so when they reached a place where the road led over some planks that had been laid across a mud-hole, the mule stopped and would not move.

"The farmer, seeing the eloping couple close before him, became furious and began to beat the mule. The animal resented the insult, raised his hind legs and threw the old man with his gun into the mud-hole, where he softly settled down on the ground, while the mule ran back to the stable. The fall had stunned the man, and when he finally succeeded in crawling out of the hole the elopers had disappeared."

VIII.

We left our birthday party listening to Mr. Donnerkeil's recital of the kettle drummer's pranks.

Meanwhile this worthy has been up to the rooms of the Piano Prince, has conversed with him for a quarter of an hour, and then left the hotel in a hurry. What they spoke together may be guessed from the sequel, and so we shall not dwell on it, but return to the reception room and hear what the landlord has to report. The latter has

obviously been watching at the foot of the stairs, for he enters the room with the words: "Gentlemen, the kettle drummer came down from the Piano Prince this moment. I asked him what business he had with him. The man would not talk, but left the house with a loud laughter."

This intelligence is received with marks of indignation, and a debate is going to ensue on it between the judge and Donnerkeil, when the door opens and the Piano Prince makes his reappearance at the room.

He motions to the landlord and asks him the question: "Large hall at the hotel?" To which the latter answers: "Yes, sir, large enough to hold a regiment of amazons in hoop skirts."

The Piano Prince ignores the remark and says: "Resolved to give concert, if good instrument can be had."

To this the Privy councilor answers: "Sir, I pride myself to possess the finest piano in town, and place it at your disposal. If you will honor my humble house with your visit you may examine it."

"Will see about this after!" is the curt reply of the artist, who then continues to ask the landlord: "Paper in the place?" to which the latter answers: 'Yes, the Trumpet."

"Edited by whom?"

"By Mr. Anton Schnabel, a man who has won a world-wide fame by his talents and editorial skill," throws in the Privy councilor.

The Piano Prince listens to this panegyric with the utmost indifference, thrusts out the words: "Going to see editor," and is proceeding to the door, when he is stopped by the Privy councilor, who rises to his feet and cries after him: "If it please you, sir, I will take you to his office, and thence to my house to see the piano!"

"Come along, then," is the short answer, whereupon both leave the room followed by the landlord.

When they are gone the banker, the judge and the doctor spring up from their seats, declaring that they will run home to surprise their wives with the pleasant news, and rush out from the room.

"Now, this is real foolishness!" exclaims the burgomaster, turning to Donnerkeil. "Just think of it, to leave a glass of beer unfinished and run home on such an errand! My wife could wait five hundred years before she saw me do it. How would you act in such a case if you were married?"

"If I were married to the girl I love, I would run five hundred miles to please her," answers Mr. Donnerkeil.

"That is the way of youth, and I don't blame you," replies the burgomaster; "but let us talk

about that stranger. I noticed that you do not like him."

"Well, sir, I have no grudge against him," replies Mr. Donnerkeil. "Still, I hate his appearance and manners, and cannot understand the folly of our friends, who treat him like a demi-god and cringe before him like a troop of spaniels."

"They probably take him for a wealthy man and follow the general rule," remarks the burgomaster. "You know it is the custom of the human race to creep before the rich, even if they get nothing but kicks for it. Of course, there are exceptions, and you and I belong to them."

"You are right, sir; but now let us finish our glasses and depart without the haste of our friends," says Mr. Donnerkeil, whereupon both drink their beer, take their hats and leave.

IX.

In an arm-chair before his desk sits the editor of the Trumpet, Mr. Anton Schnabel. He has specs on his nose and a large goose-quill pen sticking behind his ear. His meditations must be profound, for he is seen to scratch the crown of his head and visit his ears and nose with energetic pulls. After a while he gives the desk a slap and

says: "Here I am sitting again torturing my brain how to fill the four columns of to-morrow's Trumpet. The news must be interesting and laid before the readers in a palatable shape. But the question is where to get the news and how to make it interesting and palatable? Let us consider a moment! They say there will be war between Russia and Turkey, but that the cause is not yet known. I could invent a cause and state that a Russian prince eloped with a dozen of the Sultan's wives. That sounds sensational and tastes of the higher spheres! We'll see about this later. Let us first look for the town news which the reporter has sent in. Ah! here they are; let us read them."

He takes up a sheet of paper and reads:

Item First. George Wolf has swapped his old gray mare for one of grocer Krummbein's calves and a bottle of brandy.

"Well, that is nice and sounds refreshing!"

Item Second. Mrs. Klein's old cat has four young kittens. One is white, another yellow, and two are of a grayish black.

"By Jove! that is interesting!"

Item Third. Deacon Sauerkraut lost his wig in the hay-loft yesterday and has been looking for it ever since. Some say that the wig dropped into the stable below and was eaten by the cow.

"Poor deacon! I pity him, and I will go and weep with him about his loss!"

Item Fourth. Cobbler Lampie has been suffering from toothache for the last seven days. This morning he went to have the aching tooth extracted. As the cobbler's teeth are very big, the barber had to use a pair of blacksmith tongs, with which, after two hours' wrenching, he succeeded in getting the tooth out. But no sooner had this been done when they found that he had pulled out a sound tooth, and that the aching tooth was still in the cobbler's mouth. Then they had a quarrel and a fight, in which the barber happened to knock the aching tooth out. He now claims his fee, which the cobbler refuses to pay. The case will come up to-morrow before the town judge.

"It requires a Solomon to decide it, and I will go and see how it ends."

The reading of the town news is interrupted here by a knock at the door and the editor cries: "Come in!"

Soon the Piano Prince Carolus Haifisch and Privy Councilor von Duselwitz enter the room. The latter cries: "Good evening, Mr. Schnabel! Always find you at your desk thinking, musing, meditating how you shall divert the reading public! To-day I come to disturb you in your laud-

able musings, begging leave to introduce to you in this gentleman Mr. Carolus Haifisch, the greatest piano virtuoso of the age, universally known as the Piano Prince. The distinguished gentleman wants to speak to you about a concert with which he intends to honor and delight our art-loving public, and which is to take place to-morrow night at the great hall of the Golden Monkey."

"I am pleased to hear this, and place myself at your command. But won't you sit down, gentlemen?" says Mr. Schnabel.

The visitors accept the offer, and then Haifisch draws out a slip of paper which he gives to Schnabel with the words: "Brought advertisement. Want to insert it with editorial. Will pay bill after concert."

"Very well, sir!" answer Mr. Schnabel. "Can I serve you in anything else?"

"Yes. Want you to sell tickets. Will come or send for money one hour before concert."

"The sale of tickets lies outside of my line; but as you are a stranger and such an eminent artist, I will make an exception, and do as you desire," answers the editor politely.

"I offered the gentleman the loan of my piano, which, as you know, is the best in town," remarks the Privy councilor, "and he will do me the honor

to examine it at my house. So, if it please the gentleman, we will leave you now."

All rise and Duzelwitz goes to shake hands with Schnabel. But not so the Piano Prince. He even does not say "good-bye," but steps proudly from the room, followed by the Privy councilor.

X.

The market place at the town of N—, as it existed in those days, would hardly suit the modern taste. It was a square formed by houses placed with their gable-ends in front, and several crooked streets were running out from it.

In the middle a long pole had been erected, which bore the Prussian black-white flag, on which the words, "In honor of the King's birthday," were inscribed in large Gothic letters.

Many houses bore wooden signs over the doors, and among them the inscriptions: "Office of the Trumpet," "Hotel of the Howling Dog," and "Police Station," could be read. Over the various signs black-white flags had been hoisted, and were waving to and fro in the gentle summer breeze.

Now people are seen crossing the square and passing along a street; and a policeman dressed in a blue coat with brass buttons, a large badge on

his breast, and with an old saber dangling at his side, is seen to issue from the police station and walk to the head of the street. After a while a drunken man comes along staggering and singing the Prussian anthem, "Heil dir im Siegerkranz." He is collared by the policeman and dragged to the station. Then the Piano Prince and the Privy councilor are seen to leave the Trumpet office and cross the market place. When they come to the flag pole they stop and look at the inscription.

The Privy councilor thinks it a fine opportunity to convey to his distinguished companion a knowledge of the important rôle he played in former years, and says:

"This day reminds me of the time when I was a page at the royal court in Berlin and came in contact with His Majesty, the King, and the many royal personages that used to visit him. All were fond of music and the great artists were commanded to attend the royal parties."

The Piano Prince listens indifferently, and then says: "Know the King intimately. Dined with him two weeks ago."

"Well, that is a great honor and not bestowed on players and singers, except they are pretty young ladies. Of course, an artist of your unparalleled genius is bound to be honored by emperors and kings," replies the Privy councilor.

"Dine with them often. Always occupy seat of honor," remarks the Piano Prince indifferently. "It is three years now since I dined with Emperor of Patagonia. His Majesty did not live in palace, but in hut built of stones and shrubs. It was elegant, I tell you."

"Well, that is a matter of taste," says the Privy councilor. "Was His Majesty surrounded by a court?"

"He was," replies the Piano Prince. "Constantly had his ministers and great generals around him. Besides had bodyguard consisting of five hundred Patagonian maidens dressed in seakskin robes. Wore helmets. Carried spears."

"They say the Patagonians are a tall race; is that so?" asks the Privy councilor.

"Yes, tall. Measured one of the bodyguard maidens. Found her to be eleven feet and three inches high," replies the Piano Prince.

"How was the fare you had for dinner?"

"Most delicious. Had whale soup, grasshoppers, and a seal stewed in a sauce of red pepper and garlic," answers the Piano Prince.

The Privy councilor seems to muse on the taste of these delicacies, and says no more.

After a while they resume their walk across the market place and enter the principal street, on which the Privy councilor's house is situated.

XI.

It is the day after the events related in the last chapter, and Alma von Duselwitz is seated on the sofa, in the parlor, reading a book, when the door opens and a servant girl announces Mr. Donnerkeil.

Soon that gentleman makes his appearance in the room, bows, and says politely: "I come to wish you a good day and bring you a copy of to-day's Trumpet."

"I wish you the same and thank you for your kind attention. Please take a seat," replies the young lady. Then, when Donnerkeil is seated, she continues: "But this is not all for which you come. I read it in your face. The real object of your coming is to speak with me about that famous Piano Prince and the concert with which he is going to bless our town."

"You guess truly, as you always do, Miss Alma," answers the young man. "It is this peerless genius of the age about whom I come to see you. His appearance in this town is not a trifling matter, as he is expected to lift our art-loving public bodily up into the spheres of heaven. You as the crown of this blessed public will be the first to take your flight on high and thereby leave your friends be-

hind in sorrow, which will wind itself around their hearts like a boa constrictor and of course, will break them all to pieces."

"If that is the only fear by which you are tormented," replies the young lady, "I can remove it at once, for I shall not go to the concert."

"And why not? if I may ask," inquires Mr. Donnerkeil.

"Because I consider the man to be an impostor. He was here yesterday to look at our piano, and told the biggest lie about his playing in London. The lie is too ridiculous to repeat, but it was received as gospel truth by my father and mother.

"I saw through the man at once, and am determined that he shall not count ME among his victims. My parents may go, but I shall stay at home."

"But is it not cruel to treat this interesting stranger in that heartless way?" says Mr. Donnerkeil. "Just let me read to you what Mr. Schnabel writes about him in the Trumpet. It is enough to move a mountain, and why not you?"

Here Mr. Donnerkeil takes up the paper and reads aloud:

"Since yesterday sojourns in our town the great Piano virtuoso, Mr. Carolus Haifisch, universally known as 'the Piano Prince.'

"Mr. Haifisch is on his artistic tour through Eu-

rope, on which he intends to favor only capital cities with his stupendous performances. A happy chance has brought him into our midst; and yielding to the desire of our art-loving public, he has declared his readiness to give us a concert, which is to take place to-night at the large hall of the Golden Monkey. Doors will be open at eight o'clock, and admission tickets at two dollars apiece are to be bought at the Trumpet office before the hour of seven.

"How immeasurably high this artist stands as a piano virtuoso may be drawn from the reliably warranted fact that the celebrated piano virtuoso Liszt does not dare to appear in public any more since great Carolus has commenced his triumphal tour."

"Is it possible?" cries Miss Alma. "And this editorial was written by Schnabel, a man of so much caution?"

"Of course it was. And are you going to change your mind now?" asks Mr. Donnerkeil.

"No, never! I fear that all the people in this town have turned crazy, and among them you, too, Mr. Donnerkeil."

"You mean that?"

"Yes, because you seem to share the general foolishness."

Mr. Donnerkeil receives this answer with a loud

laugh, and replies: "No, Miss Alma! I have no share in it this time. I took the man for a fool or knave as soon as I saw him, and I see no reason why I should change my opinion. Still, I intend to go to his concert."

"You do? And why?" asks Miss Alma.

"To cry bravo when the man turns out to be a knave."

"Ha! ha! ha! This is superb! But you would not expect me to do the same, Mr. Donnerkeil!"

"Certainly not! It would not look well in the presence of your parents, who would be among the victims."

"Well, sir, you will tell me all about the concert to-morrow, will you not?"

"I will, with the greatest pleasure."

"Oh, Mr. Donnerkeil, I am so glad that you formed the same opinion of the man and came to tell me so in the absence of my parents."

"So they are not at home?"

"No, father is at Mr. Bellmann's office to arrange with him about a serenade which they are going to give the Piano Prince, and mother went to see a friend."

"What! a serenade to the Piano Prince? And when will it take place?" cries Mr. Donnerkeil, laughing aloud.

"At five o'clock this afternoon."

"Oh, this is precious news, and I will go and find a place from which I can see the fun without being seen myself!" (Looking at his watch.) "It is half-past four now and no time is to be lost! So good-bye, Miss Alma!"

"Good-bye, Mr. Donnerkeil."

Both shake hands and separate.

XII.

We beg the reader to follow us to the front yard of the Golden Monkey. The hotel is a three-story house, with the entrance door in the middle and a wooden sign above the door bearing the inscription, "Hotel of the Golden Monkey."

Soon von Duzelwitz, Bellmann, Fuchs and Lerche, followed by a music band with kettle drummer, enter the yard and take their stand before the house. A crowd of people follow and place themselves around them. Then the Privy councilor steps forth and addresses the band and crowd as follows: "Now, friends, have your eyes on me, and pay attention to what I say and do. This is a grand occasion, which may not repeat itself in a thousand years, and we must show ourselves equal to it.

"So when I raise my hand, the band begins to

play, and after they have finished, I will bring out a toast for our distinguished guest. You then will open your mouths wide and cry as loud as you can. Now, attention!" The Privy councilor here raises his hand and the band plays an appropriate piece.

While they are playing a window in the second story opens, and the Piano Prince appears in it dressed in his robe de chambre, with his velvet cap placed after the fashion of great artists on one ear, and the meerschaum pipe in his mouth. He nods to the serenaders with a gracious smile and then listens to the music.

As soon as the band has finished, the Privy councilor and his friends swing their hats in the air, and he cries in a loud voice: "Long live the great Piano Prince Carolus Haifisch! hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

All join the hurrah. Haifisch bows, after which all leave, headed by the Privy councilor.

XIII.

Being in front of the Golden Monkey, we invite the reader to step in with us, and take a look at the great hall in which the concert is going to take place.

We are just in time, for the landlord is going to show the Piano Prince the hall and the arrangements he has made in it for the grand occasion.

Both step on the stage from which a door leads to a small compartment which has been partitioned off from it. Besides there is another door with a key sticking in the lock.

Near the compartment stands a piano with a stool before it, and the hall is filled with chairs and benches to serve as seats for the concert audience.

While they stand on the stage the landlord says to the Piano Prince: "Here is the Privy councilor's piano and there is the hall. Now look around and tell me if the arrangements suit you."

The latter casts a look at the piano and hall and replies: "Suit me well. How many doors in the hall?"

"Only one, and that is the entrance door."

"Windows high from the ground?"

"High enough to break the neck by falling out from them."

Then going to the door with the key in it, the Piano Prince asks the question: "This door leads to kitchen?"

"Why! what are you thinking about?" cries the landlord; "neither the kitchen nor the cow-stable connect with the stage! The door opens into a cor-

ridor, from which a flight of stairs leads down to an alley."

"What alley?" inquires Mr. Haifisch.

"A small road that runs along the rear side of the hotel, and has been used by actors and actresses when they played here to reach their dressing rooms without the gaze of curious eyes," replies the landlord.

While the latter is turning his back to the door, Haifisch takes out the key from the lock and puts it quickly into his pocket. After that he says: "Now let us arrange money matters. How much rent for the hall?"

"Twenty-five dollars," replies the landlord.

"Much money, but will pay it after concert," says Mr. Haifisch.

"No, that won't do; you must pay it before!" cries the landlord.

"Listen," says Haifisch; "have to receive money for tickets from editor of Trumpet at seven o'clock. You go get the money for me and I pay rent before concert."

"That will suit me first rate," replies the landlord. "Have you finished the inspection of the hall now?"

"I have. Magnificent hall! Good for concert. Going to surprise audience. Will perform something grand—amazing—wonderful! ha! ha! ha!"

Haifisch laughs very loud, and the landlord looks at him and says: "How uproariously you can laugh! I thought you could not laugh at all."

"Laugh only on certain occasions. This is one of them," replies Haifisch.

"Well, laugh on, then, but I must go now," says the landlord, whereupon both leave the hall.

XIV.

The concert is to begin at eight o'clock. But already at seven the hall has become so densely crowded that many people cannot enter.

Quite a number of ladies in elaborate toilets have appeared, and the front seats are occupied by the Privy councilor, banker, judge, doctor, burgomaster and their wives, while Donnerkeil stands near the burgomaster, resting his arms on the back of a chair before him.

With the stroke of eight the curtain rises and the Piano Prince steps on the stage. He is dressed in a long-tailed frock-coat with shining brass buttons, a white-embroidered vest, and a pair of tight white pantaloons from which his snout-shaped boots stick out like Dutch skates. Around his throat he wear a broad necktie whose long dangling ends

reach down to his waist, and from this necktie a paper collar emerges whose stiff flaps rise up to his ears, then take a forward run across his cheeks and terminate in sharp points below his eyes.

The toilet is finished by a heavy golden watch chain with dangling seals and a pair of eye-glasses, which the artist gracefully carries between the thumb and index finger of his right hand.

It cannot be denied that the attire of the artist is grotesque. But what can this matter with a man who is the greatest musical genius in the world?

Have not both Beethoven and Paganini performed with uncombed hair before emperors and kings? And have they not been recently imitated in this by Liszt?

And why should great Carolus Haifisch, this master genius of the age, be without peculiarities and whims?

It would be a violation of the privileges and adopted customs of great artists which could but serve to lessen his fame!

Certainly great Carolus is not the man to make himself guilty of such a monstrosity. Moreover, he is so thoroughly impressed with his superiority that he acts with the greatest ease and nonchalance.

He steps slowly up to the footlight, holds the

glasses before his eyes, and for some time subjects his audience to a thorough scrutiny.

After that he bows, stands motionless for a while, and casts a melancholy-comic look up to the ceiling.

A stormy applause follows this interesting introduction, and a shower of bouquets and flowers is thrown upon the stage by the enthusiastic members of the audience.

The artist now bows again and then turns and moves to the piano.

When he reaches it, he draws off his white kid gloves, lays them aside, and deliberately sits down before the instrument.

Here he raises his hands over the piano keys, spreads them asunder, and for some time keeps them in suspense.

Then, on a sudden, he pounces down on the piano keys, and deals them a blow that shakes the foundation of the house and sends a shock through the nerves of the audience!

But what is that? Is it a dream or reality what the astonished ears of the audience now hear?

A highly disagreeable, nerve and ear-rending medley of musical notes, produced by constant, indiscriminate poundings on the piano keys, and accompanied by the loud thundering sounds of a kettle-drum from the compartment, pours out its

savage din and clatter over the hall with a vehemence sufficient to kill the living and rouse the dead!

Not a shadow of melody, harmony or time can be discovered in this chaos of squeaking, jarring sounds; and this devilish music seems destined to never cease and never abate in force until at the end of a minute or so it suddenly stops, and the artist rises from his seat.

He slowly advances to the front of the stage, looks around with a mocking smile and bows respectfully.

The whole audience sits there petrified, except Mr. Donnerkeil, who sets up a roaring laughter, claps his hands, and cries in a stentorian voice: "Bravo! Long live the great Piano Prince and his famous kettle drummer!"

A howl of rage from the audience behind now follows, but no visible efforts are made by it to seize the artist and drummer, both of whom rush quickly out by the door from which the artist drew the key and lock it from without.

XV.

When great Carolus has left, the excitement and rage of the leading men is something fearful to behold. The Privy councilor, banker, judge and doc-

tor spring simultaneously to their feet and accuse each other of stupidity in their dealings with the artist. Threats and challenges fly through the air like bombshells, and nobody can tell what bloody tragedies might have followed had not young Donnerkeil stepped among them and done his best to pacify their irritated feelings.

He is assisted in this by the burgomaster, who has been out to pursue the fugitives, and now comes back with the intelligence that they caught the train for Berlin before he reached the depot.

"There is no use of crying for spilt milk, gentlemen," he adds. "Let us bear the loss like men, and if you feel like me, let us escort our ladies home and then come back to empty a keg of beer."

This suggestion finds universal approval, and they are going to carry it out, when the door through which the Piano Prince and kettle drummer escaped, is suddenly opened from without, and the editor of the Trumpet, Mr. Anton Schnabel, makes his appearance on the stage.

He immediately steps forth, bows to the audience respectfully and addresses it as follows:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: An infamous impostor has taken advantage of our love for the noble art of music and has with his companion in crime and our money in his pocket succeeded in making his escape.

"I saw through the black design of this fiend in human shape and hastened to prevent his flight. I ran across the backyard and stopped him at the foot of the stairs that lead to the alley in the rear of the hotel just when he came rushing down the steps.

"I remonstrated with him in a manner befitting the occasion and said: 'You monster virtuoso, what have you done? You have made fools of the leading men of our town! You have cheated our art-loving public, and have exposed to ridicule the famous editor of the Trumpet!'

"I tried my best. I appealed to his honor, his virtuoso heart, his conscience—yes! I warned him of the torments of hell, which are the inevitable consequences of a wicked deed.

"But imagine my profound indignation when the wretch received my honest Christian exhortations with a loud laugh, and had the impudence to deride the intelligence and wisdom of our leading men in terms which decorum and good breeding forbid me to repeat.

"He then sprang into a ready cab, in which I saw the grinning face of the kettle drummer, and thus saved himself from the serious consequences of my just resentment.

"The railroad train which soon after left for Berlin has removed him from our vengeance, and

I now ask you what shall, what CAN, we do in this provoking emergency?

"If I were Xerxes, I would send a fleet and five million soldiers in his pursuit.

"If I were Cæsar, I would have him seized and publicly decimated.

"Yea! if I were a Catherine de Medici, I would administer to him a poison so subtle and so slow in its effects that he should live a hundred years before he felt its fatal sting.

"But in my capacity as poor, shamefully deceived editor of the Trumpet, I can but give you the advice to forget the whole disgraceful affair or kill it by observing a dead silence about it."

A thundering applause from the audience follows this address. Mr. Schnabel bows deeply and then puts on his hat and leaves—an example which is soon followed by the rest.

Thus ended this memorable piano concert—an event scarcely paralleled in the history of public concerts.

As to the Piano Prince and kettle drummer we must observe that their further career is veiled in mystery.

But it gives us pleasure to state that Miss Alma von Duzelwitz and Mr. Donnerkeil were married a short time after the concert, which we have no doubt our readers will learn with satisfaction.

PROFESSOR CHIMBORAZO'S LECTURES.

LECTURE FIRST.

Ladies and Gentlemen: If we take up one of the leading newspapers of the day and run over the various events in the different quarters of the world; if we consider the ideas and acts of men in their various forms and qualities—yea! if we subject our own thoughts and actions to an impartial scrutiny: we come to the sad conclusion that the whole human race, with perhaps a few exceptions, is one large set of fools, among whom a constant emulation for the first foolship and an incessant deadly strife for the grandmastership of fools is carried on.

Footing on this argument as a general basis, we should not wonder then at the strange ideas entertained by some of our fellowmen, but should consider them as the natural outgrowth of the prevailing universal foolishness.

Now, there was some ten years ago a gentleman

living in the city of Berlin who possessed great talents, eminent scientific attainments, and an ample fortune. At the same time, he was young, handsome, and of high birth—all advantages to insure a happy life.

But still he was the most unhappy man in the world, because he had conceived the foolish idea that he had live sparrows in his head.

I had heard of this young man and his fixed idea; and considering it a monstrosity, sought his acquaintance and had a conversation with him.

We talked for several hours on different subjects, and I was surprised at the brilliant wit and sound judgment which he unfolded in the course of our conversation.

I was fascinated with the man and wished to cultivate his friendship when, on a sudden, he took me by the hand, requesting me to examine his head and sincerely tell him, if I did not find an abnormity in its size and shape.

I complied with his request and assured him upon my honor that I could not find anything of the kind except that I thought his head contained a good deal more than the average knowledge of men.

He thanked me for the compliment; but then observed that he was surprised at hearing me express the same opinion that had been expressed to him by multitudes of other persons, while he was

perfectly sure that his head differed considerably from the common size and shape of other heads, as he had about a dozen live sparrows in it.

It was fighting wind-mills to reason with the man on this subject, and so I took my hat and left.

Six months later I met the gentleman in a social circle and learned from him that he had been freed from the sparrows by one of the first physicians of Berlin.

I was acquainted with that physician and asked him how he had effected this singular cure.

He said that this was a secret which he could not divulge.

Several years had passed; when being on a visit with a friend, I chanced to meet that old doctor at an evening party in one of our provincial towns.

A number of persons were present, and after supper a general conversation ensued, in the course of which the doctor was requested to tell the company some of his experiences.

He complied and gave the following story:

"Some years ago a young man of the higher classes of society applied to me at my office in Berlin with the request to examine his head, as he believed that he had live sparrows in it.

I did so; and seeing that the man was laboring under a fixed idea, told him that his belief appeared correct and that I would devise a means to extract

the sparrows from his head without resorting to a painful surgical operation.

He was delighted and begged me to relieve him quickly of this plague, which was preying on his life blood and which he feared would render him insane, if not removed in time.

I promised that I would do my best and let him know when my preparations for his cure were finished, after which we parted.

I then went to procure a half-dozen live sparrows, which some days after I succeeded in obtaining from a peasant boy in the vicinity of Berlin.

These sparrows I placed under the lining of a hat so that they could not escape, and then sent for the young man, who soon appeared.

I told him that I had found the means to extract the sparrows from his head and requested him to sit down on a chair in the middle of the room and shut his eyes.

He promptly followed my directions, whereupon I took the hat with the sparrows and placed it on his head. I then gave the hat some taps which made the sparrows settle on the head.

After that I cut a hole into the top of the hat, and requesting the patient to open his eyes, allowed the sparrows to fly out from it.

The patient looked at them while they flew about

the room and left it through the open window, and when the last had disappeared, he sprang up from his chair in a transport of joy and nearly stifled me with his embraces.

The cure proved itself as perfect; and the man soon after married a rich young lady and removed from Berlin."

The doctor had no sooner finished his account, when a gentleman of the party, who had been sitting in an arm-chair in a corner of the room, sprang at his throat and fiercely bellowed out:

"You infernal rascal! Is that the way you cure your patients? You have shamefully deceived me, and I have the sparrows still in my head."

We all rushed to the doctor's rescue, and it was with great difficulty that we succeeded in freeing him from the infuriated grasp of the maniac.

The latter became hopelessly insane and died soon after in a lunatic asylum.

The Professor, after concluding this tale, paused a while, and then went on as follows:

"Ladies and gentlemen, the case I just related is a deplorable case of foolishness and as such calls for our sympathy; but there are amusing cases of foolishness which are apt to make us laugh. Now listen:

"Some twenty years ago I had a body servant by the name of John Stibs.

"He had come from a rural district and though active and faithful, was the greatest dunce in Christendom.

"I see the fellow now as he used to stand before me with staring eyes and open mouth listening to my orders with profound respect while a stupid smile played about his lips.

"He sometimes set me almost crazy with his stupidity; but as a general rule I was unable to become really angry with him, and most of the time had to laugh at his simplicity.

"So one morning I gave him the order to go and blacken my boots, of which there stood two pairs in an adjoining room, and bring me a pair to put on.

"He promptly obeyed the order and soon came back with two shining boots, which he placed before me.

"I was in a hurry and went to put them on, when I found that they were two left boots which John had taken from those two pairs of boots and brought me to put on.

"I felt vexed and said: 'John, you are a perfect dunce; don't you see that these boots are both made for one foot?'

"He listened to me with a look of supreme simplicity and then answered: 'Yes, sir, I see that, but how can I help it?—the pair I left outside are both made for one foot, too.'

"I rose with a loud laughter and went to pick out a pair of boots myself, while John stood there watching my motions with extreme curiosity."

LECTURE SECOND.

Ladies and Gentlemen: If we take human life in its various phases and aspects; if we consider all the cares, troubles, and adversities with which we have to contend on our path through life—yea! if we think of all the perils, painful diseases, and final death of man: we should say that human life, on the whole, is a very gloomy thing and scarcely worthy to be sustained.

Now, philosophers teach us that we ought to take things as they are and not as we desire them to be; while, on the other hand, religious teachers tell us that man was born to suffer in this world, and that he shall be comforted in the world hereafter.

Granting the palm to both teachings, it has always been my opinion that we ought to lighten the burden imposed on us with life as much as we possibly can, and that to attain this end we should banish from our thoughts and social intercourse everything that might serve to represent life in a gloomy light.

Proceeding from this standpoint, I propose to

relate to you some stories of a funny type which I hope will please you. Now listen:

There is situated in Germany, not far from the banks of the river Rhine, a small town called Sheepville, about which, on account of the alleged simplicity of its inhabitants, a great many stories were afloat.

I give the following ones for what they are worth:

First.

Once upon a time the people of Sheepville resolved to erect a large frame building.

There was in the vicinity of the town a high, steep hill covered with large timber, and they went to prepare some of it into logs with the intention to use them for the building.

They had cut a large number of logs, when a difficulty arose about the manner in which they might be safely taken down the steep sides of the hill.

Some were for carrying them down on their backs.

Others commended to place them on the backs of horses and oxen and have them carried down by these animals.

And still others were of opinion that the building should be erected on the hill first, and should

then be taken down from it in some way or other.

But seeing the infeasibility of all these measures, they finally came to the conclusion to tie ropes around the logs and gradually lower them down to the foot of the hill.

This was a hard, laborious task, but the people of Sheepville, being industrious and patient, performed it without murmur until at the end of a week or so they reached the last log, around which they fastened the ropes and began to let it down.

Be it now that the ropes were not strong enough or that they gave out—in short, it happened that the ropes broke and that the log rolled down and, after reaching the foot of the hill, took its place among the other logs just as nicely as if it had been lowered down with ropes.

Now this was an astonishing occurrence for the people of Sheepville.

They looked at the log, looked at the hill, and looked at each other in blank amazement, until one of them, who was an alderman and member of the town council, cried: "Why, friends, is it possible that we should have wasted our strength and time for a whole week in performing a task which might have performed itself in half an hour?

"Each of those logs only needed a start in order to roll down the hill by itself!

"Now, my advice is, that we should haul back those logs to the top of the hill and then allow them to roll down by themselves without labor and waste of time."

All the bystanders approved of this advice, and a meeting was held by the town council in which they decided to carry it out as the best that could be possibly done in the emergency.

Accordingly, all the logs were hauled back to the top of the hill, which took the people of Sheepville two more weeks of hard labor, and then they were brought one by one to the edge of the hill and allowed to roll down.

Second.

At another time a man of Sheepville, being out on a hunting excursion, happened to find a large pumpkin.

As he had never seen the like before he took it up and carried it with him to town.

Soon all the town folks came to look at the novelty, which none of them could remember having ever seen or heard of.

Many opinions were expressed as to what the mysterious thing could be and what might be done with it. But reaching no satisfactory conclusion,

the people resolved to place it before the town council and let them decide about it.

Accordingly, a meeting of that body was held, in which the pumpkin was subjected to a careful scientific examination.

After five hours of animated and spirited debate the town fathers came to the conclusion that the thing in question was a hare's egg, and that, if properly managed a hare of the largest kind could be hatched from it.

The interesting question now arose in which way the hatching might be best accomplished, and two hours of further deliberation brought them to the resolution that the Mayor of the town was to have the honor of calling the young hare into existence.

This officer accepted the commission and received the necessary instructions.

But then another question arose, and this was about the place in which the Mayor might perform the hatching of the egg without disturbance.

Many opinions were expressed, until at last one of the members moved that the hatching should be done in the middle of a secluded wheat field about a mile from town.

This motion was carried; but one of the members expressing his fears that the Mayor might damage the growth of wheat while stepping

through it to the hatching place, an amendment was adopted by which he was to be carried through the wheat on a bier borne by six men.

The Mayor was a large, fleshy man, accustomed to a good diet.

At the same time he was a temperance man addicted to strong drink, in which he indulged in secret.

So he took with him a basket containing a piece of roast beef, a leg of mutton, a stuffed roasted goose, a Limburger cheese, a dozen boiled eggs, and the necessary quantity of bread and butter; among which eatables he ostensibly placed a bottle of buttermilk and one of water, while he carried a bottle of Bourbon whisky, a bottle of French brandy and one of Jolly Jack Stomach Bitters concealed under his coat-tails.

When the Mayor of Sheepville had finished these preparations he repaired to the wheat field, where he found the elders of the town dressed in their Sunday clothes, and the six men who were to carry him to the hatching place.

He forthwith mounted the bier and took his seat by the side of the pumpkin, taking good care not to break the bottles beneath his coat-tails.

Then he had the basket with victuals and the bottles of buttermilk and of water handed to him; and when he had these necessaries safely stowed

away, he unfurled his umbrella, bade the elders good-bye, and commanded "March!"

It was a hard job for the six men to carry the heavy load through the high wheat; but they performed it bravely, and a short time after deposited the Mayor with the pumpkin, basket and umbrella in the appointed spot, after which they respectfully retired.

Soon the Mayor made his preparations for the hatching.

He took the pumpkin, placed it among the wheat stalks so as to prevent it from rolling, and then extending the umbrella over his head, took a solid seat on it.

After that, he began to while away time, first by causing dreadful ravages among the eatables in the basket.

Then he took a taste of the Bourbon whisky, then tested the French brandy, and finally settled down on the bottle of Jolly Jack Bitters, which he nearly finished.

At the bottle of buttermilk he first threw a contemptuous look.

Then he took it out of the basket and pushed it away a step or two in disgust.

And, finally becoming annoyed and enraged by its sight, he took it up and flung it far away from

the company of the peaceful and pacifying objects with which he was surrounded.

After having performed this humane act, he felt greatly relieved, resorted to the bottle of Jolly Jack once more, and then began to give himself a song.

But fearing that such noisy demonstrations of his hilarity might seriously interfere with the hatching process, he abruptly stopped the song, folded his hands, and said a temperance prayer, of which I am unable to give the exact words.

Having derived a great deal of comfort from this, he set himself to thinking on different subjects.

He thought of the agreeable surprise of Adam when he first beheld the beautiful Eve by his side.

He thought of the Queen of Sheba, of the beautiful Cleopatra of Egypt, of the charming Mary, Queen of Scots; and he shed a sympathetic tear when his thoughts turned on the beautiful but unhappy queen, Marie Antoinette of France.

After that his thoughts wandered over to the celebrated opera singers and dancers of his time, and he expressed the foolish desire to hear and see Henrietta Sontag, Jenny Lind and Fannie Elsler perform their songs and dances before him in the wheat field while he was seated on the pumpkin.

Why the Mayor should have thought of all these

interesting women while engaged in his important task, must be set down as a mystery; but the fact is that he did think of them, and that he drew from it an immense aid and the strength to perform his heavy task with patience.

When the Mayor of Sheepville had thus paid his homage to the lady-world, the sudden thought struck him that the French brandy had shown a somewhat strange taste.

This was a matter that required immediate investigation; and so he took up the bottle, opened it, and raised it to his mouth.

He began with taking a little swallow from it, which evinced the taste and smell of the Limburger cheese, with which the bottle neck had come in contact.

This unpleasantness he removed by wiping the bottle with his handkerchief.

He then took another draught from the liquid, which he found more palatable.

But being not fully convinced of the purity of its taste yet he took a mouthful from it which almost emptied the bottle, but which gave him the conviction that it was the pure unadulterated stuff.

When he had gained this certainty he was seized with an uncontrollable desire to laugh at something.

He looked at the leg of mutton in the basket and laughed at it.

He looked at the rest of the stuffed goose and uttered a laugh that brought the tears to his eyes.

And then, on a sudden, turning his thoughts on the bottle of buttermilk, and how handsomely he had dealt with it, a fit of laughter seized him which made him tumble down from the pumpkin and roll on the ground.

But then again, fixing his thoughts on more earnest things, he began to reflect on the impending presidential campaign in the United States of America, of which he had read in the papers, and the sudden thought struck him whether he would not make a good president himself.

This was important. It made him rise to his feet, and gave him something to think of.

He laid the index finger of his right hand to his nose and assumed a contemplative attitude.

Thus he stood for a long time, carefully weighing in his mind all the pleasant and unpleasant consequences that would ensue in case they should elect him president of the United States.

And he did not think it impossible at all that they should choose him for that exalted position.

For had not Pope Sextus the Fifth been a shepherd boy before he became Pope?

Had not Napoleon the First been a simple lieutenant before he became Emperor of France?

And were there not innumerable other instances related in history where men of far inferior stations than his had risen to distinction and the highest posts of honor?

But then the thought overcame him, and this settled the question, that he could not possibly sever himself from all his friendly relations in Sheepville for the mere sake of making a foreign nation happy, and that he had no right to deprive his native country of the benefit of his eminent genius and talents.

At the same time he saw the pumpkin on the ground, which reminded him of his duty in respect to it.

He therefore dropped down on it and, having regained a firm seat, began to think of the young hare which he was going to hatch from this enormous egg.

He thought of the motherly love and care which a hen will bestow on her young chickens, and he asked himself the question what he was to do in this respect.

He wondered what kind of a cluck he should adopt in order to make the young hare follow him.

And he wished to know whether he was to be its father or its mother.

All these were problems which gave the Mayor of Sheepville a great deal to think about.

In the course of his reflection he frequently scratched and beat his head; he made several uncivil grasps at his nose and then visited his ears with some energetic pulls—but all to no purpose and without attaining the desired solution.

Finally he caught up the bottle of Bourbon whisky, opened it and took some desperate draughts from it.

This seemed to calm him. He gradually relaxed into a state of absolute inaction; he dropped the bottle to the ground and sank into a profound sleep.

How long the Mayor of Sheepville remained in this oblivious state has never come to light.

But judging from the havoc he had caused among the liquors which he had with him, it must have been a considerable time.

He was startled from his sleep by a rustling sound in the wheat close by.

He sprang up, opened his eyes, and perceived a hare in the act of swiftly running away from him.

At the same time he noticed that the shell of the supposed hare's egg, on which he had been sitting, had a large crack in it, which he surely be-

lieved to have been caused by the young hare working its way out of it.

His first impulse after this discovery was to follow the hare and catch it.

But seeing the utter futility of such a measure, and feeling besides drowsy in his head and heavy in his limbs, he abandoned this course for the less troublesome method of calling back the hare by persuasion.

For this purpose he assumed the tender accents of an affectionate mother in calling her little one, and cried: "Oh, puss, my darling, don't run away from your mother, dear. Come, oh, come back to me!"

But flying hares are stubborn; and so it happened in this case that the hare took no notice of the Mayor's tender calls but steadily pursued its run.

The Mayor was in despair.

He gradually worked himself into a passion at the disobedience of his supposed offspring, and cried after it in threatening tones: "Why, puss, you brute! don't you hear the voice of your mother? I say, come back to me, or I will lay the switch on you!"

But then seeing the utter hopelessness of the case, and having become hoarse from incessant vociferations, the Mayor sat down on the ground,

put his face into his hands and began to cry bitterly.

It was a heart-rending grief, but it was as fruitless as it was heart-rending, for it never brought back the hare to its poor disconsolate mother.

The Mayor spent several hours in shedding tears until at length he remembered that there must still be some drops of liquor left to console him in this direful calamity and inspire him with a proper idea how to extricate himself from it.

He therefore subjected the different bottles to a careful examination and to his joy found in them still a quantity of liquor sufficient to answer the purpose.

In order to render it more effective, he drank it in little sips, then ate the rest of the stuffed goose, made the leg of mutton follow it, and was about to eat the rest of the Limburger cheese when a thought struck him which made him drop the cheese to the ground and leap and dance about the place in a transport of joy.

Soon he took up the empty bottles and stored them away so as to hide them from idle curiosity.

Then he broke his umbrella in pieces, and after that took up the pumpkin, cut it into many small parts and scattered them about the place where he had been sitting.

Finally he tied his handkerchief around his

head, seized his broken umbrella and the basket, and left the wheat field.

He took his way straight to the city hall, stepped before the elders of the town, and spoke as follows:

"Distinguished fellow-citizens of Sheepville: Our great poet Schiller says: 'Do not try the gods, and never wish to trail what they kindly hide in night and veil.'

"And Schiller was a wise man and knew what he was about when he made this wise saying.

"But, gentlemen, let me ask you: did we follow his advice when that curious thing was brought and laid before the town council which we judged to be a hare's egg, and which you gave me the commission to hatch?

"I say no; we did not. We were desirous to learn what was in it; and the consequence of it is now that you see me here before you with my body all bruised, my head swimming and bound up with a handkerchief, and my umbrella broken in pieces.

"Gentlemen of the town council, it was a terrible ordeal through which I have passed while engaged in carrying out your commission.

"But listen:

"According to your instructions I placed the supposed hare's egg on the ground, took a solid seat on it, and unfurled the umbrella over my head.

"It was a most uncomfortable situation, as it

imposed on me a constant watch to maintain my bodily equilibrium and avoid the serious danger of dropping down on my nose.

"But I stood it bravely and tried to while away time by singing, praying, eating a piece of bread, and taking an occasional draught of buttermilk or water.

"Thus I might have sat for three hours, when I felt the hare's egg gradually become very hot.

"I thought this to be the natural consequence of the hatching process, and was going to refresh myself with another draught of buttermilk, when to my terror and consternation the supposed egg exploded under me with a fearful crash and a force which threw me several miles up in the air.

"It was a lucky thing for me that I held the umbrella extended over my head; for so it happened that when I reached the turning point in the upper strata of the air, I did not sink down, but remained floating in the air in a position from which I was able to overlook about one-half of the globe.

"Gentlemen, it was a splendid sight, and I forgot over it the imminent peril in which I was.

"I looked around me and saw the Emperor of Russia skating on the River Neva in St. Petersburg.

"I saw the Queen of Sheba take a refreshing

bath in the River Manzanares, and heard her scold her chambermaid for having neglected to bring her a piece of Castile soap and a towel.

"I saw the King of Prussia in the Schlossplatz of Berlin box the ears of a soldier for having a fly-spot on one of his shining coat buttons.

"I saw the Pope in Rome stretch out his foot to a kneeling Spanish duke and invite him to kiss his slipper.

"I saw the Sultan of Turkey sit in his seraglio at Constantinople, holding an important state council with seven hundred and fifty pretty young ladies.

"And, finally, casting my eyes across the Atlantic Ocean, I saw a mosquito sitting on the capitol of Washington, busily engaged in scratching its right ear with one of its hind legs.

"In one word, I felt delighted with the variety and grandeur of the sight.

"But then the startling difficulty presented itself to me how I should manage to get down to the ground without breaking my limbs or neck.

"This was a great puzzle, and it took me an hour to solve it.

"At the end of this time I reached the conclusion that I would descend by folding up my umbrella a little; and this measure had the desired effect.

"For scarcely had I done so when I began to sink slowly down.

"I was already going to congratulate myself on my happy descent, when in reaching the lower strata of the air, the attractive power of the earth became so strong that I reached the ground with a fall that broke my umbrella in pieces and made me rebound some fifty feet in the air, after which I dropped heavily down on my head.

"For a long time I lay there unconscious; but then, regaining the use of my faculties, I found that I had come down in a place close to the spot from which I had ascended.

"I looked for the hare's egg, but saw nothing but little pieces of it strewn about the place; and then it occurred to me that the mysterious thing could have never been a hare's egg.

"Or do you think, gentlemen, that hares' eggs are filled with powder and shot and may explode when you sit on them to hatch them?

"My opinion is, and I would swear to it, that the thing in question was a bombshell left in our fields during the French war of 1815."

When the Mayor of Sheepville had finished his address, the elders entered into consultation and after a short time announced to him that they concurred in his view on the supposed egg, and that as a reward for his services and an equivalent for

his damages, they had decreed him an allowance of one hundred dollars.

Thus ended the famous pumpkin affair in the German town of Sheepville.

LECTURE THIRD.

Ladies and Gentlemen: There are no limits to the foolishness of man in this world.

You may with some probability assume what a man can do; but there is no telling what he may or will do. And so I leave the probability or improbability of the events which I had the honor to relate to you about Sheepville to your own consideration and judgment.

As to myself, I must say that I felt struck with the singularity of the stories told about Sheepville and therefore made up my mind to go, see the place, and subject its inhabitants to the test.

It was on a bright September day in the year 1840 when I thus entered the quiet little town of Sheepville.

I found it to be a queer-looking, old-fashioned place, as it lay there with its dozen crooked streets formed by houses all of which stood with their gable ends turned to the street.

In the middle of the town there was a market square with an odd-shaped courthouse and some large poplar trees which obviously were of great age.

But altogether the town made a favorable impression, as it had clean, nicely paved streets, on which many a stately tree spread out its leafy branches.

I entered the town in a mail coach, from the windows of which I kept a constant lookout at the people in the streets, expecting every moment to see some odd person do some odd thing.

But in this expectation I was disappointed, as every one of the persons I saw behaved in a reasonable manner, and some pretty girls whom I chanced to meet, betrayed a decided intelligence in their faces and a grace in their motions which charmed my young eyes.

Soon the stage stopped before a large gable-house with a sign over the door representing a grim lion, painted in blue, around which the words, "Hotel to the Blue Lion" were written in large Gothic characters.

When I alighted I was received by the landlord, who was a tall, bony man of forty.

He politely invited me to the reception room, and accommodated me in a way that left nothing to wish for.

In a few days I felt perfectly at home in Sheepville.

I formed the acquaintance of some of its prominent citizens, who introduced me into their family circles, and I found them all to be intelligent people without a shadow of oddity or foolishness about them.

My landlord, too, was a well-spoken man.

He had seen a great deal of the world and used to tell me many interesting adventures.

He was a native of Sheepville, and had been raised in it; but there was nothing in his manners that cast a ludicrous reflection on him.

He even was a witty man, and would often surprise me with a joke that gave me much to laugh at.

Thus I had passed away a week in Sheepville, when sitting one morning in the reception room, together with my landlord and some other persons, we saw the stage coach arrive and stop before the house.

The landlord went out to receive the arriving guests, and soon returned with a short, fleshy man of forty-five, whom he invited to take a seat in the reception room while he would go and prepare a room for him.

When he was gone, the stranger threw himself into an arm-chair and looked about with an arrogant air.

Then he began to whistle a vulgar song, and having performed this to his apparent satisfaction and the profound disgust of the persons present, he pulled off his boots, thumped them on the floor, leaned back in his chair, and indulged in several loud gapings.

No doubt, the man was dressed like a gentleman, but with his rude manners was the greatest clown on earth.

After the lapse of some minutes the landlord came back to inform the stranger that he had arranged his room.

The latter received this announcement with a haughty look and the remark that he was afraid he wouldn't find suitable accommodations in Sheepville.

The landlord listened to these words with a smile and said that he would try his best to do honor to his house and the place in which he lived, if the stranger would not go beyond the bounds of reasonable demands.

To this the latter replied that he was a gentleman and as such could not possibly be unreasonable in his demands.

"But look here, sir," he added, with a malicious smile, "is it true that there are so many fools in Sheepville? I have heard a great deal about the silliness of its people, and I should like to stay

here for some days if I could experience something funny that would make people laugh—yes! I even would not mind paying the costs of a good joke."

The landlord replied that there were opportunities for a good joke in Sheepville, and that the stories related about the place and its inhabitants were true in cases where the costs of the joke had been borne by outsiders.

The stranger received this reply with a mocking laugh and then pointing to his boots on the floor, said: "Very well, sir, I am glad to hear it; but now I would beg you to take my boots away and bring me a pair of slippers, in which I may walk about the house."

And when he saw the landlord pick up the boots and go with them to the door, he cried after him: "But don't forget the joke which I wish to experience in Sheepville."

"Don't be afraid about that, sir; you shall have it, and that very soon!" was the landlord's prompt reply, whereupon he left the room and closed the door behind him.

The stranger seemed amused and began to whistle that vulgar song again.

He was going to repeat it, when the door opened and the landlord appeared with a pair of leather slippers in his hand which he placed before him.

The stranger put them on at once, and walking about the room in them, exclaimed: "Why! is it possible; but I must say that these slippers fit my feet exactly; just as if they had been made for me—yes! just as if made to order. Don't you find that strange, too?"

To this the landlord answered dryly: "No, sir! I do not find it strange that the slippers should fit you, for I have just cut them from your boots. And here are the tops, which you may preserve in remembrance of this silly town."

A roaring laughter from the persons present followed the landlord's words, which reached its climax when the stranger, with genuine sheepishness, looked at the tops, and snatching them from the landlord's hand went to compare them with the slippers on his feet.

When he found that the landlord's statement was but too true, he became enraged, flung the tops on the floor, and began to indulge in vociferations about the landlord's impudence, expressing the threat that he would bring him before the judge for having maliciously damaged his property.

To which the landlord answered with a smile: "Sir, you gave me the commission to serve you with a Sheepville joke and offered to pay the costs. Now here you have both the joke and the costs."

I think it superfluous to add more about this affair. Let it suffice to say that the stranger went to buy another pair of boots and left Sheepville in a hurry.

JUDGE SLOWBAGGER.

It was on a bright October day, in the year 1870, when Octavianus Augustus Slowbagger, seated in an ox cart by the side of a jet-black negro, entered the blessed little town of Terre-aux-Bœufs, in Southern Louisiana.

Everybody was struck with the peculiar appearance of the man, who in his tout ensemble bore resemblance to a full moon taken down and placed on top of a whisky barrel—such a round, happy, smiling creature was he.

Although a stranger in the place, he seemed to know everybody. He smiled on everybody, spoke to everybody, shook hands with everybody, and betrayed a strong inclination to embrace and kiss everybody, without regard to color, sex or condition.

No doubt, he was a jolly fellow this Judge Slowbagger, as he emphatically called himself, possessing as it appeared all the good nature and social qualities of a pleasant companion, combined with the noble virtues of a philanthropist.

It is true, some idle tongues would soon rumor about that sweet-smiling Slowbagger was a carpet-bagger; that he had fled from Texas, where he played the politician and was compelled to leave in a hurry, owing to circumstances commonly connected with carpetbag life.

However, as nothing positive was known about his antecedents, and he himself was very reticent on this point, that rumor began to die out, and the Judge was permitted to go about his business as Registrar of the parish for which office he held his commission.

Perhaps it was better that idle curiosity should be baffled, for the Judge, with his face all folded up in one broad, benevolent smile, showed himself extremely affable, being constantly on the alert and ever ready to spend political advice to the lowest and humblest of his fellowmen.

Indeed, it was a gladdening sight to see this corpulent little man waddle about the place, bowing here, shaking hands there, lavishing smiles and offering his services everywhere; and all this in the cause of humanity, and without ever charging a cent for it.

Being anxious, at the same time, to show the gentleman in full, the Judge was very particular in his dress, wearing a white shirt with a paper collar, striped trousers, and a plaid coat—an apparel

which might have given him the appearance of Joseph before they sold him into Egypt, had he not been above forty and so very short and fat.

Meanwhile, the two contending parties in the state—the Democrats composed of the greater part of the white population, and the Republicans consisting of carpetbaggers and negroes—were preparing for the great election contest of 1870.

All sorts of political maggots came and went, like epidemics infesting the air, intruding upon every one, haranguing every one and promising all possible impossibilities to every one.

During this transitory state of affairs the Judge adhered to the duties of his office.

But then seeing his work finished and such multitudes of fortune hunters knock about the country, his Christian heart was touched and he stepped forth to announce to the parish people his determination to immolate himself in the cause of public prosperity and accept from them the burdensome charge of Representative to the Legislature, if they would have confidence in his integrity and moderate capacities and elect him.

In order to prove his perfect disinterestedness, he alleged that he favored no special political party, that he was a bachelor and a wealthy man and consequently in a condition to spurn pecuniary advantages so eagerly sought after by others.

This unexpected manifesto from an obscure stranger aroused a volcano of evil passions in both political parties, and enlisted against the Judge an army of antagonists who, coming forth in battle-array, fired volleys of abusive epithets on him.

But the Judge was prepared for such emergencies and bore all the attacks with a taciturnity that would have graced old Marshal Moltke, of whom it is asserted that he was mute in seven languages.

Nevertheless the Judge did not remain taciturn in other respects.

Although he had never been on horse or mule-back before, he could now be seen riding about the parish, delivering oratorical addresses and preparing the unskilled minds of the voters for the great election day.

Almost everybody in the world is fond of something good to eat and drink, if it does not cost him anything. So the Judge, being a wealthy man led by humane principles, determined to give a political barbecue.

For this purpose, heralds were sent out to invite the voters of the parish to an open square before the courthouse, where the necessary preparations were effected by the Judge himself.

"Wherever there is good cheer, there must be music!" so thought the Judge; and as he did not wish that this good old custom should get lost by

his negligence, he ordered a band from New Orleans to play up for the company.

It was a gratifying sight to behold streams of human beings pour into the place of entertainment, sit down, lie down, eat, drink, talk and make merry.

There were served all the delicacies of the season usually preferred by political voters, such as fat bacon, garlic sausages, Limburger cheese, chewing tobacco and whisky; and the Judge, with a radiant smile on his face, went around among the company, shaking hands, conversing and animating his esteemed fellow-citizens to eat, drink and chew to their hearts' content.

Soon all the eatables, chewing tobacco and whisky had been consumed, and the Judge saw now the fit moment come when he could unburden his heart by pouring out before the assembly his friendly feelings toward his fellowmen in one grand, elaborate, oratorical effort.

For this purpose he had four empty whisky barrels placed so as to form a square, and boards laid across them to serve as a platform for the speaker. After which the inevitable pitcher of water and a tumbler were brought and placed on one end of the structure.

Seeing these preparations finished, the Judge

proceeded to the platform, mounted it, and took his stand

He began with eyeing his audience, then bowed to them, and lavished one of his sweetest smiles on them.

Having settled these preliminaries, he walked up to the water pitcher, helped himself to a drink, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and wiped his mouth. It was a solemn moment!

The Judge now resumed his stand, and addressed his audience as follows:

"Fellow-citizens! Friends! Brethren! When I look at the heavens above us with their brilliant sun, their silvery moon, their millions of twinkling stars!—when I think of our beautiful country with its splendid cities. its blooming fields, its enormous wealth and resources!—when I behold this blessed district of Louisiana with its dark forests, its sugar fields, its sweet potato hills!—yea! when I see these intelligent beings assembled around me, representing as it were all the human races and complexions of the globe!—my heart is seized with unspeakable delight, and I am led to consider it a deplorable whim of destiny that there should be such a thing as politics, that there should be Republicans and Democrats, that there should be men who live in strife and discord, and that there should be soldiers

and policemen to keep up order and decency among nations, communities and individuals.

"Friends! gentlemen! This world was not created to display chaos and disorder!

"This earth was not made for wicked men to live in strife and discord!

"It was not made to be the abode of robbers, thieves, and murderers!

"And it was never intended to serve as a foot-stool for corrupt politicians that they might suck the life-blood of their fellowmen and fatten on it!"

Long and stormy applause, clapping of hands, stamping and neighing from the audience. The Judge draws out his handkerchief, wipes his brow, takes another drink of water, and proceeds:

"Friends! Fellow-citizens! There are moments in human life when man, abused and knocked into the dust by the whims and freaks of destiny, feels disheartened!

"There are moments when man, vexed by the vicissitudes that beset and obstruct his path through life, feels despondent!

"Yea! there are moments when man, trampled upon by his fellowmen, worn out with cares, and stung to the heart by ingratitude and ill-repaid affection, becomes desperate and would willingly sell out his life at a discount, if he could find a taker!"

Thundering applause and cries of "Good!" "Very good!" "Go on!"

The Judge continues:

"But in no line of life assume the pangs and pains described a more cruel sting than in political life.

"Take a man harboring the most generous feelings imaginable, with his heart overflowing with love and affection for his country, his friends, and his fellowmen—I say take a perfect paragon for a politician, and you will soon see him abused and trodden down by the very men whose physical and intellectual faculties he intended to develop, whose welfare he desired to promote and whose capital he tried to direct into the proper channels!"

A voice: "Yes, into the pockets of carpetbaggers."

The Judge takes no notice of the remark and continues:

"Fellow-citizens! I dare say that this is precisely the predicament in which I am.

"I dare say I have been shamefully abused by some parties for offering myself as a political champion to this enlightened community.

"And I say that it makes my heart bleed to see my holiest feelings thus mercilessly dragged into the mire and trampled upon. But let us waive this point!"

The Judge steps to the pitcher, raises it with both hands up to his mouth, and drowns his insulted feelings in a copious draught of water. Then resuming his speech, he falls into the following high-toned strains:

"Fellow-citizens! The people of the South have succumbed in a great contest.

"It was the contest between two antagonistic organizations of society, the one represented by slavery, the other by free labor.

"I will not enter into a disquisition on the origin of the struggle, neither will I take pains to disprove that mere political intrigue, or a mere difference of economical interests or of political doctrines concerning the rights of states, were at the bottom of the quarrel——"

Here the speaker is interrupted by loud murmurs from the audience, finding vent in a dozen negro voices crying: "Speak English, we don't understand that there nonsensical stuff!" while a single voice cries: "Give us a translation of it!"

The Judge forces a smile and replies: "Gentlemen, your request that I should speak plainly to you is perfectly just; and while complying with it, I will reiterate the statements made before in other language."

Cries from the negroes: "We want no other language; we want English—plain English!"

The Judge answers: "You shall have it!" and resumes:

"What I meant to say is that the Northern and the Southern people had a war, in which the South was the losing party——"

A voice: "Every child knew that long ago!"

"Then I meant to say that the war took place between——"

Another voice: "The North and the South, of course; you need not tell us that!"

"Well, between the Northern and the Southern factions, one being for slavery and the other for free labor——"

Impatient murmurs and groans from the audience.

The Judge looks indignant and says:

"Gentlemen, I must beg you not to interrupt me so often and give me liberty of speech!"

Several voices reply: "You shall have it; go on!"

The Judge then gulps down a tumblerful of water, wipes the perspiration from his face, and continues:

"Fellow-citizens! Brethren! Before I enter upon the detailed subject of my to-day's discourse, I want to state to you my opinion of the men whom you should trust and those whom you should not trust at the pending election for state officers.

"For this purpose, let me unroll before you the pictures of two men presenting themselves as candidates—one being a decent-looking man, in possession of an independent fortune, with no family or needy relatives to clog him, and with sound moral and religious principles—the other being a seedy-looking fellow, with not a cent in his pocket, with a family and an army of hungry relatives tc support, and of doubtful moral and religious principles. For which of the two would you vote?"

A negro voice: "For the decent feller!"

The Judge grows exultant. He makes a motion as if he was going to perform a somersault, and cries triumphantly:

"Ah! would you? To be sure, you would! And so I say, you may always know the bird by his feathers.

"If a man makes a decent, dignified appearance (here the Judge thrusts back his head and attempts to look dignified)—I say, if a man makes the impression of a gentleman, and not that of a beggar——"

A voice: "Say a carpetbagger!"

"You ought to bestow your confidence on him; while, on the other hand, you should beware of a man who does not come up with the personal requisites of a gentleman, for he will lack principles.

"And I ask you what is man without principles?

"Certainly nothing but a mean, pitiful wretch that will shrink from no crime to gratify his evil passions and propensities!

"Therefore I say:

"It is principles that make man a gentleman!

"It is principles that make him worthy of the confidence of his fellowmen!

"It is principles that will sustain him in adversity!

"And it is principles that will give him a sound basis to stand on—a firm, solid foothold that will never fail and never slip away from him!"

At this juncture of his speech the eloquent Judge, to lend additional force to his arguments, performs one of those bold professional leaps in the air so very common with political stump speakers.

But lacking as it seems in agility what he possesses in eloquence, he fails to alight in the middle of the platform, and comes heavily down on one end of it.

In an instant there is a rolling, grating sound, somewhat like a mountain-slide or the fall of an avalanche.

A loud, piercing shriek, as from a lost spirit carried off to damnation, is heard, and the Judge, the pitcher of water, the tumbler, the boards, the upset whisky barrels—in short, the whole political

show is seen to strike the ground—the debris with lightning speed covering the place and burying the Judge among the wrecks. Then all becomes still; it is an appalling sight!

For a full minute the spectators stand there riveted to the ground.

Then they begin to stretch forth their necks and to cast vacant glances on the scene of destruction, never thinking of rendering aid to the unfortunate Judge.

But gradually this stupor subsides, and two negro men, having first regained the use of their faculties, hasten to the spot, seize the Judge by his legs, drag him out from the wrecks, and raise him to his feet. It is a touching sight!

But now the scene that is to enact before the staring gaze of the audience becomes ludicrous beyond description.

The Judge, being evidently unhurt by his fall, and apparently eager to announce his good fortune to the assembly, proceeds at once to mount a whisky barrel which has escaped the general tumble down.

But scarcely has he placed his feet on it, when lo! the coverboards give way under him; and with a crash little inferior to the first, he is precipitated inside the barrel, which, being upset by the fall, commences to roll away with him.

L. of C.

This superlatively funny spectacle causes an overwhelming merriment among the audience, who now burst into loud laughter at the expense of the unfortunate Judge—a laughter which gains in intensity when the latter, while extricating himself from the barrel, exhibits to their gazing eyes a large rent in his trousers, and when, after springing to his feet, he begins to run from the scene of his disgrace with the swiftness of a race-horse.

The whole audience turn and follow him, rending the air with their shouts, and sending after him an applause unprecedented in the history of public oratory.

Thus ended this memorable political barbecue, doubtlessly one of the most interesting carpetbag events on record.

And what became of the Judge?

Well, this is a thing which has never been satisfactorily ascertained.

Some state that immediately after that direful calamity had befallen him, they saw him with an empty carpetbag under his arm take long strides along the road to New Orleans, indulging in a doleful soliloquy on the fallibility of human calculations, and the ingratitude of political voters.

Others, on the contrary, assert that they saw him on the way to the Mississippi river, running furiously along in drawers, with his torn trousers held

up in the air, uttering fierce oaths and cursing like a pirate captain.

But as these statements contradict each other, and neither of them was ever sworn to before the proper authorities, or warranted by responsible parties, they both deserve little credence.

Yes, they must even be set down as untrue, if we consider the fact that the Judge, on account of his short legs, was unable to take long strides, and that as a good Christian he could never have indulged in swearing and cursing.

Finally, a strong presumption forces itself upon the unbiased mind that the said statements are nothing but base inventions of anti-carpetbagging infidels, advanced for the purpose of damaging the reputation of an honest Christian carpetbagger.

SYLVESTER STROMEYER.

I was born in the year 1842, at the foot of Mount Righi in Switzerland, where my father lived as a guide to tourists in their travels over the mountains.

It was a perilous life he led; and so one day, when he was out to conduct some students from Bavaria along a dangerous pass in the mountains, they were all seized by a whirlwind, precipitated into an abyss, and killed.

This was a terrible blow to my mother who, a short time after, died of grief.

When she was buried, arrangements were made to distribute the children among the relatives of the family.

In this manner I was given away to a distant cousin of my father, who was a rope dancer by profession.

I was then six years old, and he set at once to work to drill me for his performances.

In less than three months' time I was able to appear before the public, squeezing my body into

any desired shape, and performing the most dexterous leaps on the rope.

But my life was a miserable one, as for the most trifling fault in my performances my master would cruelly beat me and lock me up without food.

Thus I had become ten years old, when an event occurred which was to separate us forever.

We were in the midst of a performance in the market place of a small town. My master made the clown, and I was to represent a monkey.

All went on nicely and to the greatest delight of the audience, when my master suddenly began to box my ears—an act which excited the laughter of the audience, while it caused me the most intolerable pain.

I resolved to get even with him directly.

For this purpose, I performed a sudden leap over his head, grasping while I shot through the air, his wig, and leaving him in the middle of the ring bald like a cabbage head.

The ridiculous figure which my master cut in that moment caused a tremendous applause from the audience, who filled the air with shouts and roaring laughter.

For a minute or two the unfortunate clown stood there deadly pale and motionless. Then his face assumed a dark-red color; and uttering the cry of

an infuriated beast, he snatched up a heavy piece of wood, and would have killed me outright had I not resorted to instant flight.

Quick as lightning I left the performance ring and disappeared among the audience, thrusting aside some and leaping over the heads of others that blocked my way.

My master did not follow me beyond the ring, and so I ran straight to our lodgings, packed my things together in a bundle, and left the town, taking the road to the mountains.

I traveled briskly on until it grew dark.

Then I selected a solitary tree by the roadside, under which I lay down and fell asleep.

I had not slept long when I was awakened by voices and saw two men coming along the road.

I listened and heard one of the men say to the other: "Believe me, Toby, it is foolishness to be afraid of discovery. Those men are tourists, and have neither relatives nor friends in this country to inquire after them. And that they have money I know for certain, for I saw one of them draw out a purse filled with gold when he paid for a bottle of wine at the inn.

"Besides, they have no weapons; and if we lie in wait for them where the road leads along the edge of the precipice, we may easily push them into the abyss and rob them."

A shudder overran me at these words, and making an involuntary motion, I heard the other man say: "Don't speak so loud, Andy; I think I heard a rustle, and there may be somebody here that will betray us."

To this the first man replied: "You are a coward, Toby; you always hear and see spectres in the air. The night is dark but sufficiently clear to distinguish every object around us; and I can see nothing that would justify your fears. Besides, if there were anybody here, who had overheard my words, I would not hesitate to kill him like a rat."

With this the men proceeded on their way and soon disappeared in the dark.

It now occurred to me that I had passed an inn by the roadside about two miles back and I resolved to go and warn those two tourists of the impending danger.

In about half an hour I met them in the road and told them what I had heard, upon which they returned to the inn, taking me with them.

They related the matter to the landlord, who immediately sent to town for a police force to have those two would-be murderers arrested.

It is unnecessary to give a circumstantial description of the events that now followed. Suffice it to say that the men were caught and that the two tourists, after having become acquainted with

my situation, took me with them on their mountain travels in Switzerland and thence to Freyburg in Baden, where they were engaged as actors on the stage.

Both gentlemen were of a generous disposition, but possessed limited funds, and were actually without a cent in their pockets when we reached Freyburg.

In order to provide for me, they procured me a place as lamp-trimmer in the theatre and, at the same time sent me to school, where I learned to read and write.

At night I usually was at my post in the theatre, employed in filling and hanging up the lamps, after which I listened to the performance.

For several months everything went on smoothly, when one night "Othello" was given on the stage.

They had just reached the scene in which Desdemona was to be murdered.

It was a touching scene, and many of the ladies in the audience were seen to cry and wipe their eyes, when suddenly a voice from the gallery bawled out: "The lamp is dripping!"

It was such a queer, croaking voice that some of the audience began to laugh, while others endeavored to silence them.

The performers appeared to take no notice of

the disturbance, but went on in their play as if nothing had happened.

Soon the interruption was forgotten and everything proceeded as before; when that croaking voice was heard to bawl out a second time:

"The lamp is dripping, dripping again!"

Now the whole audience rose to their feet, and I saw some gentlemen point to a lamp which hung in the ceiling, and from which sure enough once in a while a drop of oil would detach itself and fall among the audience.

Quick as lightning I climbed up to the lamp, took it down and carried it into a side room, where I wiped it clean, and then went to hang it up again.

But scarcely had I done so and regained my seat when I heard that same voice roar out in thundering accents: "The lamp is dripping, dripping, dripping again!"

This time a loud laughter filled the house, the performance came to a stop, and the curtain dropped.

After a while the curtain rose again and the manager appeared on the stage.

He expressed his regret for the untimely interruption, made his apology for the neglect, and told the audience that he would instantly discharge that

lazy lamp-trimmer to whose carelessness the dripping of the lamp was to be ascribed.

Directly afterward I received my discharge, nor were my friends, the actors, able to reverse this sentence.

They gave me all the money they had, which amounted to about three florins; after which I took my bundle and left the town.

It was in the middle of March when I went away from Freyburg; and being thinly clad I had to suffer much from cold.

As long as I had money and was able to defray my expenses, I got along tolerably well, but when my means were exhausted I began to suffer from hunger and cold, as few people were willing to extend aid to a vagrant boy.

Thus I reached one day the city of Strasburg. I had not had a warm meal for several days and did not know where to get food and shelter for the night.

The day was a Sunday, and I saw people enter a church which had a high steeple with an iron cross on top of it.

The thought struck me that I might climb from the openings of the belfry up to the cross of the steeple and thus attract the attention of the people,

among whom I hoped to find some kind soul that would provide me with food and shelter.

I succeeded in entering unobserved; and reaching the belfry, climbed up to one of the openings and looked up to the roof of the steeple.

There was nothing but the bare wall between the opening and the roof, and not a cat would have been able to reach the roof from it.

I now looked around inside the belfry and perceived at a considerable height a little window in the roof to which a row of holes cut in the wall ran up.

As I was an expert climber, I used those holes as a stepladder and soon reached the window, through which I got upon the roof.

The roof was steep, but being barefooted, I found no difficulty in crawling up to the cross of the steeple.

Another moment brought me to the arms of the cross, on which I stood up, using the crosshead as a hold.

It was a stupendous height, but I had no fear and looked tranquilly down.

Meanwhile a number of people had assembled around the church to look at the strange sight.

Then I saw the people come out from church and every one stand still and look at me.

This seemed the proper moment to surprise them.

With a quick motion I dropped down on one arm of the cross, and in the next moment hung down from it suspended by my legs, with my head and arms swinging in the air.

An outcry of horror from the multitude below struck my ears.

Still I continued to perform on that cross arm a whole series of bold feats which made the crowd tremble and incessantly call out to me to quit that dangerous game and come down.

Finally I complied with their wishes, and climbing down the cross and roof with the agility of a cat I re-entered the belfry.

A minute after I appeared, bundle in hand, before the curious multitude, who instantly surrounded me, asking me a thousand questions.

I made them a sign that I wished to speak to them, and when all was silent, said:

"Messieurs, je m'appelle Sylvestre Stromeyer, et je viens de la croix de la tour d'eglise pour vous prier de me donner quelque chose a man ger et un abri pour la nuit."

(Gentlemen, my name is Sylvestre Stromeyer, and I come from the cross of the church steeple

to beg you to give me something to eat and a shelter for the night.)

A thundering applause and peals of laughter followed this address, and more than a dozen persons stretched out their hands to take me with them.

Now, I have from my infancy entertained a singular predilection for fat men, especially when their noses are turned up at the tip; and you may safely rely on it that out of every one hundred of them ninety-nine will be of a generous disposition.

So I did not hesitate to place my hand in that of a well-dressed gentleman who possessed those requisites and weighed his two hundred and fifty pounds more or less.

He took me off in triumph and led me to his house, which was one of the finest residences in the city, and the elegant luxurious interior of which struck me with wonder and admiration.

The first thing which my host did after we had entered the house was to ring the bell and inquire of a servant if dinner was ready.

The man answered that dinner had been waiting for His Honor more than half an hour.

My host then said: "Take this boy to the bathroom that he may clean himself there, and then

bring him to the dining room; but make haste, for he seems to be very hungry."

In less than half an hour I had finished my toilet and appeared at the dining room, where I found my host already at the table.

He pointed to a vacant seat in front of him, had everything placed within my reach, and seemed delighted with the excellent appetite I unfolded in partaking of the various delicacies on the table.

When dinner was over I gave him an account of my life, which pleased him much.

He said that I should make myself at home with him, then sent for a tailor, ordered several suits of clothes to be made for me, and after a couple of days, when I was dressed in a fine new suit, took me out in his carriage to a large estate which he possessed in the vicinity of the city.

I was delighted with my new mode of life, and Mr. Leroux—this was the gentleman's name—seemed to grow more and more fond of me. I had to be constantly with him and at his command was treated by the servants of the house as if I were his son.

At the same time he provided good teachers for me and watched my progress with interest.

Mr. Leroux was a widower without children or near relatives. He was rich and lived on the rev-

enues of his estate and the interest of his money.

I had my fine riding horse and a body-servant to accompany me when I rode out.

I learned to play on the piano and to dance; and in winter Mr. Leroux took me with him to Paris, where we went to theatres, concerts and other places of public amusement.

Thus I passed a happy life until I reached the age of fifteen.

At this time Mr. Leroux's health began to fail, and, calling me into his study one day, he said to me: "Sylvester, my boy, I have not felt well these last days, and though I have no serious apprehensions, there is a possibility that my indisposition may turn out fatal.

"You know that I love you as if you were my son, and that in case of my death all my possessions will be yours.

"In order to secure you in this inheritance I had a will drawn up in your favor, and am now going to put the document into a secret drawer of my writing desk, where you will find it after my death."

With this my benefactor opened the desk, showed me the secret drawer, and placed the document in it.

I was so overcome with my feelings of sorrow

and gratitude that I could not utter a word, and so I took up Mr. Leroux's hand, kissed it fervently and wetted it with my tears.

He caught me in his arms, kissed me, and said: "Don't cry, my darling boy; there is no cause for fear yet."

Mr. Leroux, indeed, soon recovered from his illness, and in a week from that day took a carriage ride to his estate.

When night approached and he had not returned home I ordered my horse to be brought and went to meet him. I did not find him on the way and so rode up to the castle of his estate.

On reaching the open gate of the surrounding garden, I was surprised by an extraordinary commotion in the portal and large entrance hall of the castle.

Servants were running to and fro, and a groom came out, galloped away on horseback and calling out to me while he passed by: "Master Sylvester, make haste to enter the castle; Mr. Leroux is dying!"

It is impossible to describe the feelings which seized me in that moment.

I hastily alighted from my horse, threw its bridle to my groom, flew through the garden, and

a minute after entered the sick room, where I found my benefactor stretched on a lounge and apparently unconscious.

I uttered a loud cry, threw myself on my knees before him and took his hand, which I covered with kisses and tears.

He opened his eyes and looked at me with inexpressible tenderness. Then he made an effort to speak to me, but scarcely had he opened his mouth when a deadly pallor overspread his features. His limbs began to tremble, they stretched out to their full length and then relaxed; his heart had ceased to beat, and he was dead.

A shriek rang out from my heart, for I loved my benefactor tenderly—yes! I bore him all the affections of a devoted son.

An hour later the groom returned with a doctor, but it was too late.

I will not dwell on the grand preparations made for my benefactor's funeral and the placing of his body in the family vault of his castle. Suffice it to say that I remained at the castle crying and grieving for a week and then returned to the city to tend to the affairs of the inheritance.

When I entered our residence in town I was met at the door by a tall, hook-nosed man, who

stopped me with the question what business I had at the house.

I indignantly pushed him aside and went straight up to Mr. Leroux's study.

Here I locked the door behind me, stepped to the writing desk, which I opened with the key that I had found in my benefactor's coat pocket, and then went to open the secret drawer.

Everything appeared in perfect order, the drawer flew open as soon as I touched the secret spring, but there was no document in it!

I now commenced a minute search in the other drawers of the desk, but no document containing Mr. Leroux's will could be found.

After I had spent an hour in fruitless researches, I heard voices approach the door and somebody try to open it.

I went to see what it meant, when to my surprise I met the same man again who had accosted me before.

But this time he came accompanied by the servants of the house and a man in uniform, who handed me a written injunction from the magistrate, by which I was ordered to turn over all the funds, papers, documents, etc., of the late Mr. Leroux to his lawful heir, Mr. Arthur Vilain, and then quit the house, premises and estates of

the said Leroux forever, or incur the penalty of the law, which was a fine in money and six months' imprisonment at the house of correction.

A thunderbolt falling from the clear sky could not have surprised me more!

For a minute I looked around me in perplexity and stupor and did not know what to say.

But when I met the malicious eyes of the servants whom I had never harmed, and who but yesterday looked up to me with servile miens, I regained my perfect self-control, and after upbraiding them and the false heir with stealing Mr. Leroux's will, I wrapped up my clothes in a bundle and left the city in nearly the same destitute condition in which I had entered it five years before.

It was a beautiful day in the month of May, 1857, when I took my departure from Strasburg.

The fields were green and the birds sang in the foliage of the trees. Everywhere was life and joy, while my heart alone was sad—sad on account of Mr. Leroux's death, and sad at the thought of what would now become of me.

I followed the great road that led to Paris, and walked along on it until the cross of the church

steeple on which I had performed my daring feat five years ago disappeared from my sight.

Then I selected a shady tree by the roadside and sat down under it to reflect on my future prospects.

They were hopeless indeed; for in a thickly settled country like France it was no easy matter for a boy of my age, who had lived in luxury and affluence, without being bred to useful labor, to make a living.

I took out my purse and, counting the money in it, found that five francs and forty centimes were all the funds that I possessed.

This sum, used with the strictest economy, would last me for a week at most, and I thought with terror of the time when it would be exhausted.

While I thus sat wrapped up in gloomy thoughts, I heard the tramp of a horse coming along the road from Strasburg.

I looked up and saw a gentleman approach who seemed to be in a great hurry.

He soon reached the place where I sat, and I found to my surprise that it was Mr. Barosse, my former dancing master.

He professed to be exceedingly glad of having found me, alighted from his horse, tied it to a tree, and sat down by me on the grass.

After that he seized my hand and said: "My dear boy, scarcely an hour has passed since I heard of your misfortune, and you may believe me that it has met with my sincere regret.

"I know your circumstances, and can fully appreciate your present embarrassing situation.

"You are without money and friends, and what is worse, you do not possess that aptitude for labor which alone could secure you a living.

"On the other hand, you possess personal advantages, talents and abilities which few boys of your age can boast of possessing.

"You have the long raven locks, the bright, soft eyes, the white teeth, the fair complexion, and the rounded form of a girl.

"Added to these advantages, you possess the agility of a cat; you are able to twist your body into any desired shape, and you dance with such perfection and grace that there is not a person in the world that can surpass you in it.

"Endowed with these rare qualities and accomplishments a fortune is held out to you if you will stretch forth your hand to grasp it.

"I see you are surprised at my words; yet don't interrupt me, but listen to the brilliant proposition which I have come to make.

"I said that a fortune is held out to you. Now,

let me add that a fortune is held out to me likewise, if you are willing to lend your hand to reap those two fortunes.

"You know that I am an expert dancer myself; but I am growing old, and old dancing masters are like old maids—nobody wants them.

"My proposition now is that we should join hands and travel through the world as a couple of ballet dancers—you in the attire of a young girl passing for my daughter, and I representing your father and professional companion.

"In this way we shall in a few years realize a fortune which we will divide and then bid adieu to ballet dancing."

As may be easily imagined I received Mr. Barosse's proposition with amazement, and after having reflected on it for some time, gave him the answer that I could not possibly lend my hand to a deception of my fellowmen, and that I intended to look my fate, whatever it might be, boldly in the face.

Mr. Barosse replied dryly that he could see no deception in the appearing of a boy in girl's attire, as not the sex of the ballet dancers it was for which the public were to pay, but the pleasure and pastime they derived from their performance.

At the same time he declared that the public

was a many-headed monster which wanted to be deceived, and that if I declined to accept his offer he would find somebody else to serve his purposes.

I then subjected my helpless condition to another consideration, and, seeing at the end of it absolute want staring me in the face, I declared to Mr. Barosse that I accepted his proposition and would leave it to him as father to provide for the suitable attire of his daughter.

He laughed and said that nothing in the world could be easier.

He then requested me to go to the next village and await him at the inn, as he intended to return to Strasburg to regulate his affairs and buy the necessary things for my transformation.

With this we separated, and I proceeded to the village inn.

On the next day Mr. Barosse arrived.

We both went to my room, where he displayed before me a variety of ladies' dresses, skirts, bonnets, shoes, gloves—in short, everything requisite to dress me up as a fine young lady.

In less than half an hour I had finished my toilet, being dressed in an elegant lady's traveling suit.

Mr. Barosse was delighted with my appearance; and I myself, when I stepped before the looking

glass, was fascinated with the fine-looking young lady I made.

My transformation was a perfect one, and on the following morning we took the stage for Metz, where Mr. Barosse intended to make arrangements for our first performance.

We reached Metz in due time, and the night of my appearance as a ballet girl arrived.

I must confess that my courage failed me a little when I stepped before the public.

Still there was no necessity for it. I was greeted with a thundering applause, and after having performed some difficult dances, a veritable shower of flowers fell upon the stage.

The performance proved a grand success, and on the following day all the papers of the city were filled with eulogies on the perfections, graceful motions and personal attractions of the "jeune danseuse."

I will not dwell on the many signal triumphs which I earned in the different cities of Europe.

May it suffice to say that our success surpassed our most sanguine expectations.

At this occasion I have to observe that my experiences as a ballet dancer gave evidence of the dangers to which a young girl is exposed in such station, and how difficult it must be for her to

withstand the temptations and enticing offers that are constantly held out to her.

In this respect I will relate one of the many instances in which my fortitude as a young lady was subjected to a severe trial.

We were performing before a full house in Frankfort-on-the-Main. All the boxes were filled with persons of rank and nobility, who honored me with their applause.

Among them a handsome young man of a noble aristocratic appearance paid me a special homage.

I feigned to take no notice of him, but when the performance was at an end and I had retired to my room, the door suddenly opened and the young man rushed in and threw himself at my feet.

He excused his importunity with the ardent love he professed to feel for me, told me that he was the Prince of L. from Russia, and offered me his hand and heart.

I was perplexed and did not know what to say; but then collecting myself I told the young prince that I was forbidden by cruel fate to marry any man on the globe, however handsome, rich and distinguished he might be.

The Prince received my declaration with a wild despair and staggered from the room.

On the next day we left Frankfort and I have never seen him again.

At the end of the fifth year of our professional travels Mr. Barosse and I examined our accounts and found that we possessed three hundred and ten thousand francs, deposited in different banks, besides the valuable jewelry I had received as presents.

We were then in Paris, and I declared my intention to quit ballet dancing, take my share of the money and go to America.

He had no objection; and so we separated—he to live in the Normandy of France, where he wished to buy an estate, and I to take passage on board of a ship that would carry me to the United States.

With this determination, I changed my lady's attire for that of a young man, and left Paris to go to Havre.

On my way to Havre I came to the city of Rouen, where I resolved to stop a few days and take pleasure rides into the surrounding country.

It was on a fine day in the month of June, 1862, that I thus took my first ride to a beautiful grove in the environs of Rouen.

A fine, elegantly arranged locality, with a concert garden attached to it, had attracted the fashionable world of Rouen, whom I found sitting or

promenading under the shady trees of the garden listening to the music that was discoursed by a large band.

I had been sitting at a table for some time, sipping my coffee and looking at the people around me, when my eyes were struck with the sight of a young lady of surpassing beauty.

Her dark, luxuriant hair was arranged behind in two long braids which reached down beneath her waist, while on her head it formed thick waves of a beautiful lustre.

She had soft blue eyes, a finely shaped mouth, beautiful white teeth, an exceedingly fair complexion and a profile and form which seemed to have been modeled after a statue of Phidias.

In short, she was of such enchanting beauty that I fell desperately in love with her.

She was accompanied by an elderly lady in black, with whom she took a walk about the garden and then came to sit down at a table in front of me.

I sat like one in a trance, forgetting everything around me, except the young girl whose every motion I watched with a gaze that soon attracted her attention.

Our eyes met, and she blushed and looked on the ground.

Then she spoke some words to her companion

in black who, directing a stern look at me, rose and led her from the garden.

I ran after them like a crazy man, and came just in time to see them enter a carriage and drive along the road to Rouen.

For several days that followed I went to the concert garden in the hope of finding the young girl, but in vain.

Then I spent a fortnight in walking the streets of Rouen and frequenting its churches, theatres, and places of public amusement, but with the same hopeless result.

And finally I resorted to putting an advertisement into the papers of Rouen, in which a wealthy young gentleman expressed his desire to form the acquaintance of a young lady whom he had seen on a certain day at the ——— concert garden, accompanied by an elderly lady in black.

As a place of meeting I named the concert garden and appointed the day and hour when I would be present to wait upon the ladies.

The important day arrived, and long before the appointed hour I ran through the walks of the garden.

When the hour came I was surprised at seeing a dozen young girls accompanied by elderly ladies in black, appear at the garden and wistfully look

around. However, I took no notice of them at all, and after running about two hours in vain, sat down at a table disappointed and sad.

Here another hour had passed, when a boy appeared and handed me a perfumed note containing the words: "Sir, the young lady whose acquaintance you wish to form requests you to come and see her at eight o'clock to-night, Rue Superbe, No. 53."

I was electrified with joy and was going to give the boy a handsome reward, but he had disappeared.

I then drove back to the city, and punctually at eight o'clock stood before the house named in the note.

It was an old-fashioned two-story building with a small balcony before one of the upper windows, and the Rue Superbe, on which it was situated, deserved by no means the high-sounding name it bore.

But what did I care for such trifles? Had I not money enough to provide princely quarters for the beloved girl?

I rang the bell and somebody came to open the door. It was the boy who had handed me the note.

He took me upstairs to the front room, where he invited me to sit down.

It was a large, somber room, with three small

windows and a set of old-fashioned furniture, but it was kept scrupulously clean.

Some pictures in black frames were hanging around the walls, representing bloody scenes enacted in the reign of terror under Robespierre.

Soon the door opened, and the elderly lady in black whom I had seen with the young girl, entered the room.

She saluted me by a shake of the hand, and then took a chair in front of me.

After that she examined me from head to foot with her small piercing eyes, and finally addressed me as follows:

"My young sir, you see in me the lawful guardian of the young lady whose acquaintance you wish to form.

"She is descended from one of the best families in France and is, as you have perceived, endowed with superior personal attractions.

"Moreover, she possesses accomplishments which render her equal to the most distinguished of her sex.

"Under such circumstances you will find it just that I should be careful in the choice of her company, and I would therefore ask you to tell me who you are and what talents, means or prospects you possess to enter into friendly relations with a young lady of such superior qualities."

I was disagreeably affected by this excessive scrupulosity. But love conquers all other feelings; and so I gave the lady a true account of my life, concluding the statement that I possessed one hundred and fifty thousand francs in cash and jewelry to the amount of twenty thousand francs.

At this her eyes glistened and all her previous reserve left her.

She rose from her seat, took my hand, and giving it a hearty shake, said that she was very glad to make my acquaintance, and that she did not doubt we should become good friends.

After that she excused herself and left the room.

Five minutes later the door opened and my charming girl appeared, accompanied by the lady in black, who at once proceeded to introduce us to each other.

The name of the young girl was given as Alice de Baremont, while her guardian's name was Mrs. Lafourche.

Our introduction being finished, Mrs. Lafourche excused herself again, went from the room, and left Alice and I alone.

She sat down on a lounge, playing with her fan.

I threw myself at her feet, seized her hand and covered it with kisses.

Then I confessed to her in glowing terms my love, representing it as sincere, ardent and desperate, and finally looked up to her rather sheepishly to see what impression my words had made on her.

She seemed to reciprocate my feelings, lavished a sweet smile on me, and did not withdraw her hand.

I then rose, caught the lovely creature in my arms and covered her lips with kisses.

When half an hour had been spent in mutual caresses and protestations of undying love, Mrs. Lafourche re-entered the room and announced to her ward that it was time for her to retire.

She rose at once and left the room, betraying the most charming confusion.

A new life had opened for me, the chief object of which was to make my beloved Alice happy.

Before three months had passed she was in the possession of all my jewelry, and after a year spent in pleasure and revelry, the one hundred and fifty thousand francs which I told Mrs. Lafourche I possessed, were gone to the last centime.

In the same ratio that my funds diminished Alice's affections for me cooled down; and Mrs. Lafourche, who by countless tricks had obtained

the greater part of the money, finally reproached me with being dissipated and forbade me the door of her house.

It was at this juncture that I saw a richly-dressed young man make frequent calls at Mrs. Lafourche's house.

At first I paid no attention to his visits, believing them directed to a lady who kept a crockery store on the ground floor of the house.

But then I saw him one day engaged in a long conversation with Mrs. Lafourche, and from that time my suspicion was aroused.

A jealous rage seized me, and I began to spend all my time in watching the movements of Alice, Mrs. Lafourche and the young man.

I occupied furnished rooms in front of Mrs. Lafourche's house, and with the aid of an opera glass was able to observe everything that was going on in her front room.

Being thus on a constant watch, I saw one night the young man enter this room and have a long and merry talk with Alice.

This settled the question, and I resolved to go over at once and upbraid those women with their perfidy.

But changing my mind again, I sat down and

wrote a letter to Alice, in which I implored her to grant me one last interview.

On the same day I received her answer, in which she regretted that her guardian would not allow her to go out, nor me to enter the house, and proposed that I should come and visit her on the balcony of the house.

For this purpose she offered to tie a rope around the window-cross of her front room, the end of which she advised me to take up and fasten around a window-cross of my apartment.

Being aware, she added, of my proficiency on the rope, she had no doubt that I could walk on it across the street and pay her a visit on the balcony, after her guardian and the other people of the house had gone to rest.

I embraced this opportunity with ardor, and when night came on and all was still I prepared for my trip on the rope.

Everything went on nicely, and I had already crossed the street, when in raising my hands to get hold of the balcony, the rope-end suddenly slipped from the window-cross to which it had been tied by Alice, and I made a fall to the ground.

Still I did not reach the ground, but fell on a wagon filled with crockery which stood before the house and belonged to the lady of the ground floor.

At the moment that my body came in contact with the crockery a loud rattling noise resembling a grand discharge of musketry was heard, and immediately after the immoderate laughter of persons on the balcony rang in my ears.

I looked up and saw the forms of Alice, Mrs. Lafourche and the young man, my rival, vehemently clap their hands and rejoice at my misfortune.

Nor was this all; for the door of the house opened and the crockery lady stepped out, demanding immediate pay for the damage I had caused.

An inventory was made on the spot, which resulted in my paying one hundred and forty-five francs damages.

Then, being fortunately unhurt myself, I ran to my rooms, packed my things together, and left Rouen the same night.

I did not stop before I reached Havre.

Here I counted over my available funds and found that they still amounted to twelve thousand and seven hundred francs—a sum which some inexplicable presentiment of coming mischief had made me conceal and save from the greedy grasp of those two women.

My passionate love for the fair Alice had changed into immeasurable contempt and disgust, and ardent as had been my desire to live in her

company I felt a more ardent desire now to get away from her forever, and for this purpose hastened to place the Atlantic ocean between us.

Thus two days after my arrival in Havre I stepped on board of a sailing vessel which took me to New York, where I landed on the 16th of October, 1863.

This is my story, in conclusion of which I have to add that I lost my confidence in women and have remained a bachelor ever since I fell among the crockery.

FRANZ KINKELBACH.

Franz Kinkelbach was assistant judge at a Court of Justice in a provincial town of Prussia.

He was a droll and witty man, was tall and strong, and had, although he scarcely counted thirty, already attained the rounded form of a fat man.

He was fond of playing jokes on country people whom he knew for twenty miles around and whom he used to call by their first names.

But he often did not hesitate to make the president and judges of the court the targets of his wit, which they usually accepted in good humor.

It would take volumes to relate all his droll tricks, and so we propose to give but two of them.

It was market day in town, and the country people had come to sell their products.

Among them was a sullen-looking peasant who had brought a wagon load of cabbages, on which he sat looking out for customers.

To the wagon was hitched an old white horse which was half blind and lame of one foot.

Kinkelbach was in the market, and had no sooner espied the peasant with his horse and cabbages, when he pulled his battered felt hat over his ears and veiled his face with the collar of his cloak so that nothing but his eyes remained visible.

In this disguise he approached the peasant's wagon, sneaked several times stealthily around it and cast furtive glances at the cabbages.

The peasant became aware of this, thought the man had come to steal a cabbage head and began to watch him closely.

Kinkelbach then went away, apparently to lull the peasant's suspicion, but soon came back to the wagon and was promptly seen by the peasant.

He again sneaked around the wagon, examining the cabbages, but finally stepped in front of the white horse and began to scrutinize him with great care.

This strange acting had attracted the attention of the market people, who soon flocked up to see what he was about.

Kinkelbach took no notice of them, but continued his scrutiny of the horse.

He first looked into his right and then into his left eye; then stepped to his side, stood up on tiptoe and tried to look into his right ear. He re-

peated the process on the other side, trying to look into his left ear, examined every foot separately, and let his eyes finally rest on the horse's tail.

The peasant sat astonished and with his mouth wide open.

He had attentively observed all these motions, and could not comprehend why that man with such eagerness should first examine his cabbages and now his horse.

He saw that a crowd of people had gathered, who likewise examined the horse, and he wondered what all these people could find to see on that old broken animal.

In these reflections he was interrupted by Kinkelbach.

The latter had finished his inspection of the horse and now stepped before the peasant.

Here he assumed an humble attitude, raised up his folded hands to him, and spoke in a soft beseeching voice: "Oh, please, sir, make me a present of that horse."

A loud laughter from the surrounding crowd followed these words.

Kinkelbach seemed not to hear it, but continued to beg the peasant for the horse, and finally began to cry and howl incessantly: "Oh, give me the horse! Give me the horse!"

The peasant all the while sat there staring at

the man and thinking that he was crazy, until at last the roaring laughter of the bystanders taught him that he was made the victim of a joke.

He grew angry and grasped for his whip, when Kinkelbach turned away and slowly left the market.

At another time two peasants who had sued each other were summoned before him to the court-room and took their seats together on a bench.

Kinkelbach went up and down the room dictating the protocol to a secretary, when suddenly he stopped before the peasants and said: "You have sued each other and must not sit so close together. Here, Fritz, sit down on this end of the bench, and you, Hans, take your seat on the other end."

The peasants did as they were told, and Kinkelbach resumed his walk.

After awhile he came back and cried: "Fritz, you will tumble!"

Fritz is perplexed, but calms himself when he hears the judge continue his dictation.

At his next round the latter stops before Fritz, measures him with stern eyes, and cries again: "Fritz, you will tumble!"

Fritz cannot comprehend the thing and opens his mouth to say something, but the judge has re-

sumed his dictation and goes on as if nothing had happened.

Fritz scratches his head and interprets the judge's words as a warning that he will lose the law suit.

He is strengthened in this belief when again and again he hears those ominous words issue from the judge's mouth.

Finally the protocol has been written down and is read by the secretary.

Fritz has not lost the law suit and is delighted, when suddenly the judge rushes down upon Hans, and, with the words: "Come, Hans, you shall sign the protocol," drags him quickly from the bench.

There is a momentary motion, the bench loses its equilibrium, and Fritz falls with it obstreperously to the floor.

He rises ashamed and is greeted by the judge with the words: "Well, Fritz, didn't I tell you you would tumble?"

THE FATAL POSTAL CARD.

Some fifteen years ago there appeared in several American papers the notice "Agents Wanted —From twenty-five to fifty dollars a day easily made. Apply to Tobias Blackfoot, Beekman street, New York, and learn the particulars."

I knew the meaning of this noise, but wished to learn the details. So I sent a postal card, and received by return mail a dozen printed circulars and descriptions of articles all of which had been invented to abolish human labor, and make of every agent that would sell them a Vanderbilt or Rothschild.

I laughed at the nonsense and used the circulars as kindling paper. With this I thought the matter ended.

But herein I was mistaken, for by sending the postal card I had stirred up an army of New York sharpers who soon so completely flooded me with letters, circulars and blank forms that my entire correspondence disappeared among them without leaving a trace, and that it took hours to find a

letter, a periodical, or a sheet of writing paper in the house.

And still cart-loads of that confounded stuff arrived, until at length I ran the danger of being literally suffocated in it.

Now, suffocation has always had something terrible for me, and the fear of death seized me.

I passed the nights sleepless, lost my appetite and ninety pounds of flesh in a single week.

In my despair I applied to the minister of our church, who gave me the advice to stay the evil by fasting, praying, and crying to the saints.

I did not wish to test the efficacy of this remedy, and so ran to consult a doctor, who prescribed for me a Turkish bath, a dozen leeches and half a gallon of castor oil.

The thing began to look funny, and yet the danger was a serious one.

More and more circulars, blank forms, and printed pamphlets arrived until at length I resolved to pile them up in the backyard and use them as litter for the hogs.

This was a good idea, and I found a true satisfaction in seeing how the dear animals enjoyed themselves on their soft paper bed, when one day my attention was called to a green slip of paper which served one of the hogs as a nose pad.

I examined it more closely and found it to be

a ten-dollar bill which had been sent to me the day before and which, together with the letter in which it lay, had got among the circulars and wandered to the hog-pen.

Happily it was still whole and undefaced; but the thing might repeat itself, and it was high time to face those senders of circulars and force them to quit their nefarious work.

While I was still puzzling my head about the surest way to do so, my eyes fell on an old dirty brass button with the eyelet broken off, which evidently had adorned a cloak of the last century and which had found its tragic end on this dirty piece of Texan soil.

A sudden thought struck me. I picked up the button, ran into the house, and wrapped it, dirty as it was, into a piece of paper.

After that I sat down and wrote the following letter:

FROGTOWN, Sept. 6, 1886.

Mr. Tobias Blackfoot, New York:

Dear Sir—Your favor of the 12th ult. with circulars, blank forms, etc., has duly reached me, and I send you the enclosed gold piece, begging you to let me have your famous butter recipe.

The balance you may keep and put to my credit. Respectfully yours,

RODAMONTE CHIMBORAZO.

Into this letter I put the paper with the button and mailed it.

The measure proved to be a radical cure, for I have never again been molested by New York sharpers.

A NEW ORLEANS AUCTION ROOM.

It was on a fine morning in the month of October, 1870, when Doctor Justavus Adolphus Apple and his pupil, Rupert Dumpling, strolled leisurely down Chartres street in New Orleans.

The doctor was a bachelor, some sixty years of age, tall and bony, and wore green spectacles.

He was dressed in a long brown coat with large side pockets, breeches tucked in varnished boots, and carried on his head a silk hat of the species commonly called stove-pipe.

Although inexperienced and a perfect stranger to the world himself, he had been engaged to serve as a guide and mentor to young Rupert Dumpling, a wealthy and intelligent youth of twenty, and both had come from Frogtown in the wilds of Western Texas to New Orleans to spend their time and money pleasantly.

As they thus sauntered along their attention was called to a man who carried a red flag in one hand, while with the other he constantly rang a large bell.

Now this is an everyday occurrence in American

cities and towns, but our travelers having never seen it before, were struck with the sight and followed the man to see what he was about.

They soon saw him enter a store where they found other red flags stuck out and a pasteboard posted, on which the words, "Grand Auction Sale!" were printed in large characters.

The store was filled with a multitude of people, while a man was seen to run up and down the counter like a madman, holding an article in his hand and bawling fiercely: "Fifty cents! fifty cents! fifty cents! fifty-five!—Fifty-five! fifty-five! sixty!!—Sixty cents! sixty cents! sixty cents! sixty cents!—There it goes for sixty!"

Our travelers entered the store, and took their stand among the crowd—young Rupert evincing the common curiosity of his age, while the doctor stood there with his mouth open and gazing at the man on the counter in wonder and amazement.

The man then went to open a box, from which he drew out a pair of babies' hose.

He held them up in solemn earnestness and said in a mournful voice:

"Gentlemen, my eyes fill with tears when I look at these hose.

"Gentlemen, these hose have a history!

"Please look at them and learn that they were knit by a French countess, who presented them to

a baby of Queen Marie Antoinette of France in the year 1786.

"The countess knit only this one pair and then she died.

"Gentleman, that baby never wore these hose, and could not possibly wear them now if he were alive.

"They have been handed down from generation to generation until they were finally brought to the Paris Exposition of 1867, where we bought them at an enormous price.

"The stringency of the times compels us to sell them to-day, and I offer them to you at the nominal price of twelve dollars.

"Twelve dollars! twelve dollars! twelve dollars! Nobody there to take them, eh?

"Gentlemen, I offer you that pair of hose together with two more pairs of the same kind for six dollars. Come, take them and feel happy.

"Six dollars! six dollars! six dollars! Gentlemen, I add three more pairs and let you have the six pairs for three dollars.

"Three dollars! three dollars! three dollars! Gentlemen, I add six more pairs of hose and let you have the whole lot for one dollar!

"One dollar! one dollar! one dollar!"

Here the auctioneer, who was a nimble young man, performed a dexterous leap from the counter

at the doctor, flung his arms around his neck and said in a tender, reassuring voice: "Yes, sir, you shall have them at that price—nobody else shall!"

Then turning round and raising his voice, he cried: "Gentlemen, please step back and let me hand this dozen babies' hose to this worthy man. I know he needs them, and he alone is entitled to carry them off for one dollar." And with this the auctioneer stuck the package into the doctor's coat pocket.

Then taking off his arms from the doctor, and holding out his open hand to him, he said: "Now, sir, please to fork over that one dollar to me."

The doctor stood there like one in a trance.

He opened his mouth to declare that he was a bachelor, and did not need the hose, but was prevented by his interlocutor, who begged him not to lose a word about it, entreating him at the same time not to betray the bargain to a person outside the locality, as he had just fears that the whole population of New Orleans would come and storm the store to obtain babies' hose at that unparalleled low price.

The doctor saw there was no escape from the man, and so he drew out his pocketbook and paid the dollar amidst the laughter of the bystanders.

The auctioneer then jumped back upon the counter and in the twinkling of an eye drew out a

package of handkerchiefs, which he held up before the assemblage with the words:

"Gentlemen, you see here a dozen handkerchiefs which were hemmed by the great Shah Nureddin Hamet of Persia.

"He wanted to send them as a birthday present to his sweetheart, the young Princess Kanikickalola in Kabul, Afghanistan, but by some unaccountable mistake they got into the mail bag of New Orleans, where we succeeded in obtaining them at a heavy cost.

"Now, let us see what they will bring at auction. Gentlemen, make your bids!

"Forty cents! forty cents! forty-five cents! Fifty cents! fifty cents! Sixty!

"Gentlemen, please proceed with your bids. Time is precious, and we have no right to waste it.

"Sixty cents! sixty cents! Seventy-five!

"Eighty cents! eighty-five! Ninety cents! One more bid, gentlemen, to make it a full dollar! It will save us the trouble of sending to the bank to have the bill changed.

"Ninety cents! ninety cents! Ninety-five!"

The auctioneer here begins to sing:

"One morn in May
A maiden did say
To a bird on a tree:
Come go with me."

Then suddenly turning round on one heel, he performs a catlike leap at a short, fat man standing near the counter, shoves the package of handkerchiefs into his hand, and cries in a terrible voice: "One dollar!"

The short man looks frightened, but then with a smile draws out his pocketbook and pays the one dollar.

The auctioneer pockets the money, heaves a deep sigh and, stepping to the shelves behind the counter, draws out from them a little round tin box.

He shows it to the assembly and says:

"Gentlemen, please open your eyes and look at this box. You will perceive that it is dusty and that it has dark spots which nobody can fail to acknowledge as rust spots.

"But, gentlemen, this box is not what it appears to be. It is a treasure in itself and it contains a treasure, as I shall directly prove to you. But listen:

"There was in ancient times a king residing in the city of Babylon.

"This king bore the name of Nimrod and was surrounded by courtiers and a host of pretty, young court damsels, all of whom I regret to say have since died.

"Now, it happened that this king had a war

with a neighboring king, and that in one of the battles he lost an ear, which one of the enemies severed from his head by a single saber stroke.

"The ear dropped to the ground, but the king succeeded in picking it up and put it in his vest pocket.

"Although there was some consolation in this, you will admit, gentlemen, that it is an unpleasant thing for any man to run about with one ear on his head and the other in his vest pocket, and especially so for a king.

"So the king sent out heralds to summon all the wise men of his kingdom to the capital in order to consult them on the subject and, if possible, have them devise means by which the ear might be restored to its proper place.

"Meanwhile the king took out the ear from his vest pocket, had it salted, in order to preserve it in a sound state, and had it nicely placed on a saucer and deposited in the kitchen safe.

"Now, this would have been the very best place for the safe keeping of the salted ear, if the king's housekeeper had used the necessary precaution and had shut the door of the safe when she left the kitchen.

"But you all know, gentlemen, that there is no reliance on housekeepers, especially if they are

young and in love. And this was actually the case with King Nimrod's housekeeper.

"She was a pretty, young girl of eighty-five summers and had bestowed her affections on a dashing youth of ninety-six, who held a commission as lieutenant in the king's guard.

"It was night, after supper, and a meeting had been concerted between the two lovers which was to take place in a room next to the kitchen.

"So when the young girl heard the steps of her lover she rushed out to receive him with a kiss, and in her haste forgot to shut both the safe and the kitchen door.

"This was the favorable moment for a large butcher dog to enter the kitchen and, seeing the safe door open, he at once caught the smell of the salted ear, which he seized and swallowed in one piece.

"In that moment the housekeeper happened to come back to the kitchen. She saw the dog, missed the ear, and the terrible truth dawned upon her.

"But she was a resolute lass and not easily daunted. So she instantly seized a knife, took hold of the dog and killed him.

"What now followed, gentlemen, you may easily imagine. Suffice it to say that a quarter of an hour later the royal ear lay on the saucer in the

safe in exactly the same condition in which it had been before it was swallowed by the dog.

"On the next day the wise men of the kingdom arrived at the capital.

"They immediately set to work to find a remedy by which that ear might be durably refastened to the royal head.

"And they found that remedy. Yes, gentlemen, they found it by inventing the cement which is contained in the tin box I here hold in my hand.

"Gentlemen, look at the box and learn that it was made by a tinsmith in Babylon more than five thousand years ago, and that the cement contained in it was put in by the very men who invented it.

"It now remains for me to relate how we got possession of the box of cement and to state the different purposes for which it may be used with immense profit.

"In this respect I observe that King Nimrod, after the adjustment of his ear with a teaspoonful of the cement, was so delighted with the superior virtue and usefulness of the remedy that for the remainder of his life, which is computed to have amounted to three hundred and seventy-five years, he constantly carried the box of cement with him in his coat pocket.

"When he was dead they wanted to take it away

from him, but there was a provision found in his will that it should be buried with him.

"This provision was carried out by the executors of the will, and thus the box of cement became entombed in the royal sepulcher, and gradually sank into oblivion until, about two hundred years ago, it was exhumed from the ruins of Babylon, and proved by a learned professor of France to be the identical box of cement which had cured King Nimrod's ear and which that potentate had carried with him in his coat pocket for the space of three hundred and seventy-five years.

"I chanced to be in Paris at that time and purchased it at the nominal price of ten thousand francs.

"Seventy years later, when I was serving as an officer in the Prussian army under Frederick the Great, I had, in the battle of Kunersdorf, my left leg severed from my body by a cannon ball.

"The leg stuck in a top-boot with a spur on it, and was carried off by the ball to a distance of one thousand yards, where it remained hanging in the foliage of a big poplar tree.

"It was brought back to me by a Prussian ulan and, having the box of cement with me, it took me but a minute to refasten the leg in its place.

"And now, gentlemen, if any one of you should have the misfortune of having a limb severed from

his body or his nose shaved off by a clumsy barber, he will find the cement of immense value.

"But this is not all; it will actually cure and bind everything that is cut, torn or broken, be it a limb, a night shirt, or a coffee pot.

"Yes, gentlemen! so great is the mending power of this non plus ultra cement that you may safely go home now, break all your furniture in pieces and then come here and buy a box of it, which will restore it all in the twinkling of an eye."

The auctioneer finished his address with singing:

"The dog sat down to eat his bone,
The cat went out to walk alone.
Tweedledee, tweedledum, tweedledee,"

and then stepped back to the shelf from which he took twenty more boxes of cement and placed them on the counter.

At this one of the bystanders called out:

"Look here, Mr. Auctioneer! did King Nimrod carry all those boxes of cement in his coat pocket?"

The auctioneer turned round and answered promptly: "No, sir, only one; but he carried the rest stuffed in his pants and boots."

Then taking up again one of the boxes and resuming his business air, he said: "Now, gentlemen, make your bids——"

At this moment Doctor Apple and his pupil, Rupert Dumpling, left the auction room and were followed by the author, who thus lost the result of that important sale.

A PROVOKING CALAMITY.

Some days after their visiting the auction room, Doctor Apple invited his pupil, Rupert Dumpling, to go and take a refreshing bath with him.

There was no objection on the part of the young man to follow the invitation of his mentor, and so they went to Lake Ponchartrain, where they soon engaged a bathroom, undressed, and stepped into the water.

The doctor began at once to give his body a thorough washing, while Rupert, who was a tolerably good swimmer, struck out for deep water.

After the lapse of half an hour they left the water and went back to the bathroom.

But imagine their surprise and dismay when they found that their coats, trousers, vests and overshirts, together with their watches and pocketbooks, had been stolen!

It is true the thief had been generous enough to leave them their undershirts, drawers, hats and boots, but how were they to reach New Orleans in such apparel?

They put on, however, what they had and then ran over the losses they had sustained.

They found to their consolation that their watches had been of little intrinsic value and that both their pocketbooks together had not contained above ten dollars in currency.

Still they were in a bad plight, situated as they were among strangers, without money and clothes.

At length they rose—the doctor dressed in his undershirt, drawers and boots, with his plug hat on his head, his green spectacles on his nose, and an umbrella under his arm; and Rupert dressed the same, with his round hat in his hand.

They left the bathroom, and went to the office of the establishment, which they entered, but found nobody present.

Rupert at once selected a corner and sat down in it.

But the doctor, hearing voices in front of the house, stepped out into the street, and finding about a dozen persons sitting or standing before the door, directly went to address them.

The assembly were startled at the sight of the slim, half-dressed figure. But their astonishment soon gave way to a first-class merriment when this phantom of a man assumed the attitude of a model speaker, and with an earnest face and upraised hand, spoke to them as follows:

"Gentlemen, there are occasions in human life so momentous and so pre-eminently important in their immediate consequences that all considerations of a minor nature sink into utter insignificance and oblivion before them.

"The occasion that presents itself here now is one of the kind.

"Gentlemen, you behold in me a man who, being engaged as guide and mentor to an inexperienced young man from Frogtown, in Texas, came here with his pupil to take a bath.

"We engaged a bathroom, undressed, and stepped into the water, where I forthwith began to let my body have the benefit of a thorough washing, while my pupil went to exercise his skill as a swimmer in deep water.

"Soon he had left me far behind and reached a distance of three hundred yards from the shore when——"

Here the doctor is interrupted by a short, stout man in the crowd, who cries: "Sir, you are seriously mistaken in the distance. It was scarcely a hundred yards that the young man was away from you."

The doctor looks at the man with an astonished air, and says: "Well, let it be a hundred yards then, if you say so."

A voice from the crowd: "Oh, never mind the distance! Go on with your speech!"

The doctor grasps about for his handkerchief, but finding that he is in drawers without pockets, performs an extempore wiping of his nose with his shirt sleeves, and resumes:

"Gentlemen, I was going to say that the young man was a considerable distance away from shore when I suddenly saw him disappear from the surface of the water——"

A voice: "He dived under then, did he not?"

Another voice: "Perhaps he exchanged the swim in the water for a flight in the air."

A laughter from the crowd followed this remark.

The doctor feels annoyed and says:

"Gentlemen, please don't interrupt me so often; or I shall never come to the end with my discourse.

"I say the young man had disappeared and I was in despair, fearing that he might be drowned.

"But this fear was soon dispelled when I saw that promising youth reappear on the surface of the water and strike out for the shore.

"Soon he joined me and we both went back to the bathroom to dress——"

A voice: "Ah! did you? I don't think you

had much of a dressing though, judging from your present appearance."

The doctor feels provoked at this new interruption, and turns to the man with the fierce question: "Can you dress, sir, if you find no clothes to put on?" Then he continues:

"All I want to state is that my pupil and I in coming back to the bathroom made the embarrassing discovery that our coats, trousers, vests and shirts, together with our watches and pocketbooks, had been stolen."

At this juncture a policeman steps through the crowd, which has become very large, and laying his hand on the doctor's shoulder, says to him: "You are my prisoner, sir; I arrest you for indecent exposure of your person in a public street."

The doctor is thunderstruck; he shrinks back, opens his mouth, and looks at the officer with surprise.

He is going to make a reply, but in that moment the proprietor of the bathhouse appears and, invites both the doctor and the officer into the room, where he explains the matter to the latter in a satisfactory manner.

After that he puts the question to the doctor and his pupil if they locked the bathroom door from the inside before stepping down into the water.

This question being answered in the negative, the proprietor disclaims his responsibility for the damage, but offers to provide the strangers with clothes and advance their fares to New Orleans if they will give him their notes for the amount.

To this they readily consent, after which they return to town two sad but wiser men.

THE ITALIAN BANDIT CHIEF, GIUSEPPO CARAMBOLI.

Dear reader, if you never saw a Texas sunrise, go to Texas and see one.

If you belong to that class of people whom vulgar language styles slug-a-bed or lazy-bones, we respectfully beg leave to assist you with our advice and tell you how you may safely effect the sight of that grand natural spectacle.

This advice we tender gratis and give as follows:

First go and procure a clothesline and place it on the pillow of your bed so that you may find it when you retire for the night.

Then go and find some trusty person that will undertake a night job, and promise him a reward of five dollars for it.

Do not follow economical principles, and think you might secure one for less, nor engage a night watchman, a waiter, or the stable-boy of a hotel, for in all such cases there are nine chances to one that you will be disappointed.

To the person engaged give minute directions how to act, and be sure that he is fully instructed of every particular of the job so as to perform it with energy and precision.

After you have secured both clothesline and man, repair to your bedroom precisely at ten o'clock P. M., put on your nightclothes, and pull off your socks. Then take the clothesline and fasten one end of it around the ankle of one foot.

Having done so, go and open a window, and let the other end of the line drop out into the street. Be sure that it hangs down deep enough to be reached by a person below.

When you have finished these preparations, say your prayers and go to bed.

Now, if you have given the person whom you intrusted with the night job full directions how to manage the end of the line that hangs down into the street, and have told him the exact hour when to begin the operation, there can be little doubt that you will wake up at the right time to see a Texas sunrise.

We are at a loss to say whether Mr. Tobias Snipkin of San Antonio, Texas, had resorted to the described measure to awake in time; but the fact is that one early morning we found him standing on top of a hill near Bœrne, a small country town of Texas.

And, strange to say, when the sun rose Mr. Snipkin turned his back on him and looked in a westerly direction.

We happened to be at the foot of the hill, and being endowed with a good deal of curiosity, as authors always are, we crawled up and took a covered position behind him, from which we were able to observe the man and find out what had brought him there so early.

We had not waited long, when we saw the stage coach from Comfort come along the road and reach the hill.

Mr. Snipkin promptly stopped it, had a parley with the driver, and then entered the stage to go to San Antonio.

As we had business in that city, too, we slipped in after him, and were soon engaged with him in a long and interesting conversation about the weather and the crops.

Thus we drove on until by eight o'clock the stage entered a dark forest. Here the driver allowed the mules to slacken their pace; and both Snipkin and we took out some food and drink for bracing up our mortal selves, when a terrible "Halt!" rang in our ears.

The driver stopped the mules, and we saw three men with cocked revolvers surround the stage. They were wild-looking fellows; and soon one of

them, while examining us from head to foot, said with an ironic smile:

"Gentlemen, my companions and I feel stung to the heart by the necessity of disturbing you in your laudable exertions to satisfy the inner man. But our orders are strict, and we have to obey them if we wish to avoid fatal consequences.

"You will therefore please hand over to us your money and valuables for the examination of our illustrious chieftain, and be sure to observe the strictest honesty in producing them, as we have orders to punish the slightest attempt at deception with instant death."

Mr. Snipkin and we listened to this harangue with feelings of dismay; but seeing that resistance was out of the question, both of us drew out our watches and pocketbooks and handed them over to the robber.

The latter asked whether this was all that we had about us, or whether it would be necessary to assist us in the honest work of emptying our pockets.

We said that we had handed him everything we had, and that the most diligent search would not be able to elicit one more cent from us.

The gentlemen of the road seemed satisfied with this assertion, and were going to take their leave, when Mr. Snipkin asked them to tell him who

that illustrious chieftain of theirs was, where he lived, and how he had learned that we were to pass along this road.

To this the man who had formed the speaker before, replied:

"Sir, your desire to learn something about the great man to whom we are to deliver your watches and pocketbooks for examination, is natural and just, and I think I do not overstep my license as an officer when I satisfy your curiosity.

"Know then that we are in the service of the celebrated Italian bandit chief, Signor Giuseppo Caramboli, who lives on a mountain peak in Italy, and that we received orders from him this morning to stop the stage coach from Bœrne to San Antonio, take from its two passengers their funds and valuables, and send them over to Italy for his examination."

Mr. Snipkin was amazed, and exclaimed:

"Sir, your tale is the most wonderful I ever heard!

"Please do tell us how that great bandit chief, who, as you say, lives in Italy, learned that two passengers were going to-day in the stage from Bœrne to San Antonio, and why he should want to examine our money and valuables."

"Nothing more natural than that!" replied the officer.

"The illustrious Giuseppo Caramboli lives in a tower which stands on the highest peak of the Apennines. This tower is of an immense height—yes! it has been ascertained that it outmeasures the celebrated tower of Babel by ten thousand feet and three inches.

"From the top of this tower our chief is able to overlook the greater part of the inhabited globe. He is on a constant watch—having abolished sleep altogether—and as soon as he sees some well-fed travelers enter a stage in any part of the world, he telegraphs to the station next to it, and sends his orders.

"It was an hour ago when we thus received his telegram in respect to you, gentlemen.

"He probably saw you enter the stage this morning, for he describes you in a way that leaves no doubt about your identity.

"Your question why Signor Caramboli should want to examine your money and valuables, I cannot answer. But I have no doubt that he will give you all the information you desire, if you will go to Italy and see him about it."

With these words the dutiful officer of the great Caramboli saluted us in a soldier-like manner, and was about to depart with his companions, when a thundering "Halt!" resounded from the

thicket by the roadside, and a squad of a dozen armed men came out from it.

In the twinkling of an eye they had the robbers surrounded and in another instant they had put the cuffs on them.

After that they led them to a large tree, in the shade of which they held a court-martial over them.

They were convicted of having committed numerous robberies and were sentenced to be hanged on the spot.

This sentence was executed at once; and fifteen minutes from their capture the robbers dangled from the limbs of the tree under which they had been tried.

We received back what they had taken from us, and continued our way to San Antonio.

THE MAIDEN GRANDMOTHER.

I.

My name is Erasmus Pancratius Boodlemeyer, and I was born in the village of Pancow, near Berlin, in Prussia, where my father was a milkman. I am now forty-five years old and measure four feet in length and three in breadth. I was never taller, nor was I thinner since I entered into manhood.

I must have been unusually handsome in my younger years, for whenever I walked along the streets the girls would stop and smile on me. This was flattering and made me vain; still none of them succeeded to conquer my heart, until one morning, while passing along Broadstreet in Berlin I was struck with the sight of a maiden of extraordinary personal attractions.

She was tall, broad in shoulders, and very fleshy and fat. Her head was covered with an abundance of flaxen hair which fell in huge ring-

lets down upon her shoulders. Her face bore resemblance to the rising full moon except that instead of a gold-yellow color it appeared like purple and chalk. Her eyes were small but of a charming greenish color and blink. Her eyebrows, in contrast to the hair on her head, were black, and eyelashes she had none, but this deficiency was made up by a sort of half-suppressed moustache which covered her upper lip. Her nose was short and broad, and her mouth, although toothless and of considerable size, was beautifully red and inviting. Her hands and feet corresponded in size with her colossal form, and the ground shook under the majesty of her step.

She was dressed in a grass-green robe with broad yellow trimmings, and wore on her head a small straw hat which looked like a strawberry basket placed on top of a pecan tree. In one word —she was the most beautiful, most imposing and most charming creature that I had ever seen.

She swept by me like a queen, and I turned round and followed her. I would have followed her around the Globe! She took wonderfully long steps; and I had, in order to remain at her heels, to resort to a kind of short gallop. Several times she turned her lovely head and looked at me with a bewitching smile.

Thus we wandered on—she like Calypso, lead-

ing the way to her grotto, and I like a little spaniel, following her traces.

Finally we reached a large open square in the outskirts of Berlin called "the Butcher Meadow," where she stopped before a small house. She cast another bewitching look on me and seemed to wait for me.

I bounded up to where she stood, threw myself at her feet, and, raising up my folded hands, confessed to her in glowing terms that I had fallen desperately in love with her.

She listened to me attentively and lavished one of her sweetest smiles on me. And then the lovely creature caught me up in her arms, kissed me tenderly and carried me into the house like a mother will carry her babe. When we reached the room she sat down on a chair and placed me on her lap. Then she asked me who I was, and where I had seen her first.

I told her all, after which she opened her rosy mouth and said that she was leading a solitary life, and that for a long time she had been looking out for some congenial being of the stronger sex that might help her beguile the dreary hours of her solitude. After that she asked me my name, my age, height, and what I liked best to eat and to drink.

I told her that my name was Erasmus Pancra-

tius Boodlemeyer, that I was twenty-two years old, measured four feet, and that my favorite food and drink were sauerkraut and lager beer.

She smiled and said that her name was Fannie, her age forty-four years, that she measured six feet, and that she considered garlic sausages and brandy to be the most delicious food and drink. And then the charming creature caught me in her arms again and kissed me affectionately.

II.

Several weeks had passed since I made the acquaintance of my beloved Fannie, and I had lived in a state of perfect bliss, when one morning I awoke earlier than usual.

I thought I would surprise Fannie with a morning call, and soon took the accustomed road to her house. When I approached it I saw a tall, middle-aged woman, accompanied by half a dozen children with bouquets and wreaths of flowers in their hands, enter the front yard of the house.

A feeling of curiosity seized me; and, walking around the house and climbing over the fence, I sneaked up to the open window of Fannie's bedchamber and took my stand among some shrubs.

Soon I heard a knock at the door and Fannie's

voice call "Come in!" My curiosity became stronger, and climbing up to the window opening, and hiding behind the shutters, I saw the door open and the woman and children enter the room.

The woman stepped straight up to Fannie, who, negligently dressed in her night-gown and seated in an arm-chair, stretched out one hand to her and bade her welcome.

The woman seized the outstretched hand, kissed it affectionately and said: "Dear mother, I've come to congratulate you on your fifty-seventh birthday."

Fannie received this congratulation with marks of pleasure, thanked the woman for her daughterly attention and invited her to sit down.

Then the oldest of the children, a girl of sixteen, stepped forth and presenting Fannie with a wreath of flowers, said: "Dear grandmother——"

This was all I heard.

Fannie!—my sweet girl Fannie!—a grandmother! She had never told me that!—The blow was stunning. I was seized with a swoon and sank helplessly down among the shrubs.

How long I lay there I cannot tell. When I gained consciousness, I hurried away from the spot like a maniac, and soon reached the open field. I ran on across cornfields, woods, and swamps until I came to a deep brook called "the Sheep Ditch."

A desperate thought struck me; and following a sudden irresistible impulse, I threw myself into the water to drown myself. . . .

III.

Fishermen drew me out and laid me on the grass.

When I had recovered, I made up my mind to starve myself, and for this purpose selected an old decayed house in the woods.

It had neither doors nor windows, and its walls had been pierced by the ravages of time and the elements. Its roof hung down in shreds, and the old tin gutter had been loosened on one side and become the play of the winds.

When I entered, multitudes of owls and bats left the rubbish heaped up in the rooms and hid in the holes and nooks of the old broken chimney.

It was a picture of utter desolation, but I liked it, for it corresponded with my thoughts and feelings.

I gathered up some grass and spread it in a corner of a room which was still covered with a piece of ceiling and a shred of roof. After that I lay down to ruminate on the instability of human felicity.

I called back to my mind the day when I first beheld that fairy-queen Fannie and confessed my love to her.

I thought of those happy hours which I had spent sitting on her lap or walking with her in the Butcher meadow while she fondly led me by the hand like a mother will lead her pet child.

And how everything had changed now!

Fannie!—my charming Fannie!—a grandmother! . . .

The thought was too much! It was to set me crazy! It was to kill me!

I sprang up from my couch and ran about the room raving.

I thrust my head against the walls and uttered the roars of a lioness which has been bereft of her young ones.

Thus I raved on for hours until I dropped down exhausted upon the couch again and began to ruminate anew.

IV.

At length night came on, and with it a thunderstorm with heavy wind and rain.

But what did I care for the ragings of the elements since my heart was torn to pieces?

Then the rain began to pour down on my couch, and I put up my umbrella to shield myself from its furious attacks. The old tin-gutter, which hung down from the broken roof of the house, was violently shaken to and fro by the wind and shrieked for mercy. But I had no mercy; the world had been merciless to me!

Oh! it was a terrible night, and when morning came and the storm abated, I felt weak, heart-broken and hungry.

I reasoned with my stomach, telling it that it must henceforth remain without food and drink.

But it would not listen to me, and by noon-time drove me out of the house, chased me about the woods, and, finally, drove me back to the city, where I entered a restaurant and satisfied its cruel cravings with a hearty meal and some copious draughts of lager beer.

V.

After that I felt better; and calming down to my usual state of mind, I went to my lodging, where I sat down to count over the money I had left.

It amounted to four hundred and seventy-five dollars in gold, and while I sat looking at the glit-

tering yellow pieces, the thought struck me that it was foolish in a young man like me to commit suicide on account of a woman who could be my grandmother.

At the same time, I wondered how such a foolish thought could have ever entered my brain.

Still I felt disgusted with Berlin, and resolved to leave it forever.

On the very next day, I took the train for Hamburg, and a couple of days after I was on board of a sailing vessel which brought me to Texas. I settled down in the little town of Bumford, where I have lived ever since. . . .

This is my story; and if you, dear reader, should ever happen to go to Berlin, you will do me a favor by going to see Fannie, and give her my regards.

It is twenty-three years since I left her, and the beautiful girl must be some eighty years old now.

You will easily recognize her by her stately figure, her huge flaxen ringlets, and her constant smell of garlic sausages and brandy.

She will have become a great-grandmother by this time, and you may tell her that I love her still.

BILL FOGY.

The people of Rockville had convened a meeting in which the question was to be decided whether a railroad would benefit their town.

Already several men had spoken, and in convincing language illustrated the many advantages of a railroad; and there seemed to be no doubt that all the persons present would cast their votes in favor of it.

But then another speaker took the stand, and looking around with a roguish smile, addressed the meeting as follows:

"Gentlemen, there are questions in this world which seem to admit no negative answer.

The question before us is one of the kind, and yet I propose to raise my voice in favor of its negative side.

But let me caution you against the expectation of hearing me adduce a number of forcible arguments, for in such expectation you would be disappointed, as the whole force of my reasoning will

be based on one single argument and nothing more.

And what is this remarkable argument? you will ask.

Gentlemen, this argument lies buried in a long and touching tale about white and black sheep, grasshoppers, white bears, and hot rum-toddy; and as I have some fear that this tale might weary you, I shall not begin with it before I know you wish to hear it."

The people of the meeting expressed their desire to hear that tale, whereupon the speaker resumed as follows:

"Gentlemen, the story, which I am going to relate to you now, is one of the strangest stories on record, and in giving it I shall reach the most forcible argument against railroads that can be possibly devised. But listen:

Strolling along one day through the streets of Jefferson, Texas, I fell in with a man by the name of Bill Fogy.

He appeared some sixty years of age, was short and fleshy, had a broad, squarish face, crooked legs, and was blessed with a large copper-red nose and a pair of little eyes of that indefinable shape and blink which seems to be the peculiarity of fat men.

He constantly wore a long swallow-tailed coat, breeches tucked in coarse top-boots, and an old slouched hat with a broad brim.

In his right hand he used to carry a heavy cane with a brass head; and nobody could recollect his having ever seen him without a long dirty pipe, to which a leather tobacco bag was tied by a string adorned with blue tassels.

This old Fogy was well known in Jefferson and bore the reputation of being an odd, whimsical fellow.

He was a prominent member of the world-renowned Fogy family, and as such engaged in the task to introduce and promote fogyism when and wherever an opportunity offered.

I had been previously introduced to Mr. Fogy, and as it is my maxim to improve every chance that may tend to enlarge my knowledge of the world, I decided to have a social talk with him, and for this purpose, invited him to a tavern, where we were soon seated behind two smoking glasses of hot rum-toddy.

I say "hot rum-toddy," gentlemen, for it was a chilly day; and as both my and Bill Fogy's consciences were not clogged with such a thing as a temperance oath, there was no earthly reason why we should not indulge in hot rum-toddy.

For some minutes a solemn silence prevailed.

Then we commenced to sip our toddy, and Bill, having apparently attempted to take too large a swallow of the hot liquid, was attacked by one of those sudden, violent coughs which form the curse of social conversation.

But he soon recovered from the attack, expectorated three or four times, drew out his blood-red handkerchief, wiped his mouth, and then addressed me as follows:

"Sir, a great many theories have been broached by philosophers of our age about the relative influences of colors on the physical system of the animate creation of the world.

But I ask you, sir, what value can we attach to theories when our daily experiences prove their utter fallacy by displaying to our eyes the very reverse of the doctrine they proclaim?

Now, sir, permit me to elucidate this matter by stating a case in which science proves palpably erroneous in its conclusions and deliberately strikes into the very face of facts.

Philosophers, you know, advance the theory that the black color is prone to readily admit the atmospheric agents of heat and cold into the systems of the bodies it covers; while on the other hand a white color will repel heat and cold and thus shield the bodies it covers from the absorbing influences of those agents.

Footing on this theory, they infer the further theory that an augmented exposure of animate beings to the influences of heat and cold will necessitate for them a greater quantity of nutriment; and armed with this apparently irresistible logic, they proclaim to the world the thesis that black sheep will eat more than white sheep eat!

Now, sir, I am free of skepticism and contradictious tendencies; but in this case suffer me to state the indisputable fact that white sheep eat immensely more than black sheep eat, because there are immensely more white than black sheep in the world!"

Having concluded his discourse with this old piece of fools' philosophy, Bill Fogy seized his glass, gulped down its contents, and then fell into a state of profound reverie from which he was awakened by the appearance of another glass of rum-toddy which I had ordered to be brought for him.

He eyed it like a man will eye an old acquaintance, took a sip from it, and then startled me with the abrupt question, "What is your opinion on Grasshoppers, sir?"

I answered that I considered them to be one of the greatest plagues with which humanity was cursed.

He said that I was right, but that this was not the point of the question.

He then seized his glass, took a copious draught from it, and said:

"Sir, a great many contradictory opinions are entertained about the origin and birth place of these pernicious insects.

Some say that they hatch in the Rocky Mountains; others assert that they come from Alaska; and still others maintain that they have their cradle somewhere near our great lakes. But nobody ever undertook the task of making this matter the object of an earnest investigation.

Now, sir, I am opposed to empty conjectures, and so I have investigated the matter with the greatest possible zeal, and in the course of my labors have succeeded to discover not only the spot on the globe where grasshoppers emanate from, but also the true natural process by which they are called into existence.

It is an established fact, sir, that wherever you go, the grasshopper swarms will come along with the north wind and fly in a southerly direction.

Suppose now, you go up to the highest northern latitude that you can possibly reach and see the grasshoppers still come from the north, where will you think then they come from?

Ah! you are silent, sir, you cannot answer that question! Now, let me answer it for you.

They come from the north pole because the north pole is the northernmost point of the globe.

And as it would be too cold for them to hatch there by themselves, I do maintain, and I would swear to it that they are hatched out there by the white bears!"

You may imagine, gentlemen, that I was amused with this wonderful discovery. Still I kept earnest, and told Mr. Fogy that I would go up to the north pole as soon as practicable, and have a view of that interesting grasshopper production.

He lauded my intention and emptied his glass.

After that a lull followed in our conversation, and I rose to leave the place, when I was stopped by Bill with the request to sit down and hear what he had to say on railroads.

I consented, and he opened his discourse by telling me in a mournful voice that Jefferson was to become a railroad town.

"Look here, sir," he added almost despairingly, "I have lived in this place for twenty-five years, and have grown old in it. I have helped build up its houses and churches, and have done everything in my power to make it a respectable looking town.

But there are some measures of improvement to which I never shall and never will consent.

So for instance, there was the measure to prohibit pigs from running about the streets; against which I voted, because I considered it a flagrant violation of personal rights which must not be tolerated in a free country.

Then they proposed to build a school-house and establish a large graded school.

I helped to vote the project down, because I consider education a most pernicious thing for the rising generation.

Then again they wanted to build a bridge across our bayou, against which I voted, because I thought people had no business on the other side of the bayou.

And finally, they have conceived the monstrous idea of making Jefferson a railroad town!

But against this project I am armed with the strongest and most convincing argument that can be possibly devised.

Now tell me, sir, have you any doubt that I am a man of progress?"

I said that I had not, and begged Mr. Fogy to tell me his argument against railroads.

He shook his head and said that the time had not yet come to divulge it.

I ordered some more rum-toddy and pressed him for the argument.

Another shake of his head was the answer.

I then made him empty his glass and had more toddy brought for him.

When he had consumed this too, I repeated my request for the argument.

He made a final attempt to withhold it. But then, on a sudden, changing his mind, he cried in a loud, thundering voice:

"I am opposed to making Jefferson a railroad town! I shall be a ruined man, if they ever carry out this project! For then THE STEAM-WHISTLE WILL DISTURB ME FROM MY SLUMBERS!"

And with this he fell back in his seat utterly crushed and overwhelmed with anguish and despair.

A large tear began to roll down his cheek. He tried to brush it off; but failing in the attempt, he thrust against the table, and table, rum-toddy and tear came to the floor with one tremendous crash.

The sight was too touching for my tender feelings, and so I took my hat and left.

But I have saved the argument!

And this argument, gentlemen, has followed me ever since and will probably haunt me to my grave.

I have treasured it up in my mind and have adopted it, and I now express the hope that you will do the same and vote against making Rockville a railroad town, preventing thus the dreadful calamity that THE STEAM-WHISTLE SHOULD DISTURB US IN OUR SLUMBERS!"

Tremendous applause followed the last words of the speaker.

Several voices cried: "Bill Fogy is right. We don't want that railroad noise. We want to sleep undisturbed by the steam-whistle!"

"And so do we!" exclaimed a hundred other voices.

The presiding officer then took the votes, and the result was two hundred and ninety-five votes cast, of which two were in favor of the railroad and two hundred and ninety-three against it.

A PRACTICAL COURSE IN LAW.

My old friend and college chum, Justus Traube, had been sent to a small town in Prussia to receive his practical training at a Court of Justice.

Chance brought me to the place, and I resolved to pay him a visit.

I found him at a nether room of the courthouse stretched on a pile of law records.

As soon as he saw me, he cried: "Be a thousand times welcome, my old fellow: but excuse me, if I receive you in an oriental fashion. I have adopted the habit of a quiet toper, and this, as you will comprehend, requires under circumstances a horizontal position.

"Apropos! do you feel like taking a smile? Proceed to that corner shelf, and you will find there a wicker bottle which contains the veritable life elixir."

I thanked him for the proffer, but excused myself with the early hour.

After that we told each other our experiences and fell into a pleasant chat.

Finally I rose to take my leave, but was requested by Justus to remain.

He rose from his couch and walked slowly to the corner shelf to convince himself, as he said, by ocular inspection that shelf and bottle were still in existence.

The inspection seemed to have resulted favorably, for I soon heard some prolonged guzzling sounds issue from that corner of the room.

I made another attempt to go, but was again detained by Justus, who shoving me back upon my seat, bade me to stay and see how he dealt with troublesome litigants.

The thing appeared interesting, and I remained.

I had not waited long, when the door opened and a shrewd-looking peasant walked in.

Justus immediately took his seat in an armchair and looked dignified.

Then the following discourse ensued between the two:

"What do you want, my good man?"

"I want to sue my neighbor."

"So, and why?"

"He has hung my dog."

"So, and have you brought the dog with you?"

"No, I buried him."

"So, and has he received a decent burial?"

The peasant casts an astonished glance at Jus-

tus and remains silent. The latter rises from his chair, walks to the corner shelf, and takes a long draught. He then wipes his mouth, looks ruefully up to the ceiling, and resumes:

"So, and you said the dog had received a decent burial?"

"I said nothing of the kind."

"So, and what did you say then?"

"I said that my neighbor had hung the dog."

"Ah, indeed! I now remember. But now arises the question: What was the dog's name? How old was he? Was he married? Has he left a widow and children to mourn his loss? Did he possess property? Has he made a will? Have codicils been found? Or has he died intestate?"

"Oh, pshaw! my neighbor hung the dog and that is all."

"So, and how do you know that? Did you see it? Have you witnesses? Do corpora delicti exist, and which?"

"No, nobody saw it; but I know it, because my neighbor has always been inimical to me."

"That is no proof; the dog must be produced!"

"But what will you do with the dog?"

"I myself nothing. But he shall be examined in legal form. That is, he shall by clever surgical hands be touched, turned, rolled and carved to pieces—yea! he shall be reduced to the smallest

atoms, if the importance of the case and the interest of science demand it."

"And why shall so much trouble be taken with the dog?"

"To find out how he lost his life."

"But I told you already that the dog was hung by my neighbor."

"Ah! there lies the difficulty. You cannot prove that, and therefore must the dog by learned professors be anatomized and analyzed—yea! he shall be chemically dissolved by our first chemists in Berlin to establish the facts in the case."

"But what in all the world shall those professors and chemists see in the dog?"

"They shall see—nay! they shall prove beyond a shadow of doubt whether the dog was hung by some malicious person, or whether deliberately and with suicidal intent he hung himself."

The peasant appears paralyzed and stares at Justus in amazement.

The latter rises, walks to the corner shelf and takes another drink. After that he resumes:

"You seem to think it impossible that the dog should have hung himself, and yet is this highly probable.

"The dog, for instance, may have been a pursued criminal who had no other refuge left.

"He may have been a murderer and as such been tormented by the most dreadful remorse.

"He may have been a jilted lover and been driven to self-destruction by despair.

"Yea! what will say still more, he may——"

The peasant seemed resolved to hear no further arguments. He turned quickly round, left the room, and slammed the door behind him.

I felt amused, but Justus did not move a muscle of his face. He heaved a sigh of relief, and walked again to the corner shelf.

Some minutes passed, and another litigant stepped into the room.

He was a short, lean man, and seemed to possess a choleric temper.

He immediately went up to Justus and cried in a voice trembling with rage:

"If it please Your Honor, I have just received a mortal insult!"

Justus examined the man from head to foot and replied:

"So, and mortal do you say? Relate the particulars and state whether you were awake or asleep when you received the insult!"

The little man looked surprised and says more moderately: "The tailor Tips has just called me a rascal."

Justus looks indignant, springs up from his chair and cries:

"What! and that has the man dared to say? And what did you say to it?"

The man replies: "Oh, I said that I would sue him for libel."

Justus goes to the corner shelf, fortifies himself with another drink, and says:

"So, and you said that to him? That was brave of you. But what did he say to it?"

The little man casts an inquiring glance at Justus. The latter shows an earnest face and looks dignified. The man then replies:

"He said that it was all the same to him and that——"

Justus does not allow the man to finish. He assumes a threatening attitude, approaches the man with his fist raised in the air, and roars:

"What! and that dared the man to say? That is shocking! That is appalling! That is unpardonable! But what did you say to it? I must know that! I will——"

The little man becomes frightened, makes a retrograde motion to the door, and runs from the room.

I looked at my watch and saw that I had to go and catch the train. I took leave of Justus, and have never seen him again.

CASPAR LANGNAS.

Caspar Langnas was a tall, flaxen-haired youth of twenty with a lean face and a long nose which terminated in a sharp point.

He was fond of pleasure, loved the fair sex and something good to eat and drink, but possessed the vice to be constantly without money and let others pay for him.

In the company of ladies he was awkward and bashful, and seldom failed to commit some clownish act.

He had come from a country town to Berlin to study law, and continued to dress in the fashion of his native place which found expression in a sugar-loaf felt hat, a knit Napoleon vest, and a long-tailed dark-green coat—three oddities which at balls and festive occasions were replaced by a battered plug hat, a short white vest, and a blue swallow-tailed frock-coat with shining brass buttons.

To his fellow students Caspar showed himself arrogant and quarrelsome and was therefore avoided by them.

He occupied furnished rooms on Landwehr street together with a young man who bore the sobriquet of "Spottvogel"—Mocking-bird,—because he was skilled in music, sang, and possessed the art of closely imitating the voices and manners of others. Besides these accomplishments he was witty, liberal and obliging. In one word he was the decided contrary of his room-mate Langnas.

Notwithstanding this difference in character, the two lived peaceably together until an incident occurred which was to separate them forever.

The case was this:

Langnas had contracted the bad habit of smoking Spottvogel's cigars. The thing became expensive and Spottvogel resolved to put a stop to it.

For this purpose he provided himself with half a dozen cigars that at the lower end were filled with a chemical preparation which, after lighting the cigar and smoking it for some time, would explode with a loud report and violently tear the cigar from the smoker's mouth.

The explosion was harmless, but seldom failed to give the smoker a cruel shock.

Spottvogel now waited until Langnas had gone to bed, and then laid the cigars on the table.

On the next morning, he saw Langnas light one

of the cigars, shove another into his pocket, and leave the room.

The weather was rainy, and Langnas carried an umbrella which he put up before the house.

Spottvogel saw him leisurely walk up the street, and then noticed a young lady, who had always been a great attraction to Langnas, coming down the street.

Langnas hastened to step aside and make room for her. He removed his umbrella and raised his hat, but left the lighted cigar in his mouth.

These preparations had scarcely been finished and his body brought into the position to make the lady a courteous bow, when the fatal cigar exploded and was seen to fly from Langnas' mouth before the lady's feet.

The effect was tragical. Umbrella and hat sank from the hands of the amorous youth, while he himself performed a sideleap which landed him in the gutter.

Here he halted, casting a troubled look at the young girl.

The latter had stopped in surprise, but soon took in the situation and went away laughing.

Poor Caspar! The dose had been too strong for him, and he moved away from Landwehr street on the same day.

Soon it was known that he had taken lodgings

on Landsberger street, and that, at the same time, he had begun to pay amorous attentions to the daughter of his new landlady.

To Spottvogel he had vowed eternal vengeance, and he tried to insult him on every occasion.

The latter resolved to get even by playing another joke on him.

For this purpose, he sat down and, in a feigned hand, wrote to the daughter of Langnas' landlady as follows:

Berlin, February 15, 18—.

Miss Amanda Rosenkranz

Present.

Most respected Miss!

Love is the name of the invincible power which forces me to implore your sisterly aid, and betray to you feelings which hitherto lay carefully stowed away in the ocean depths of my maiden heart.

These feelings are of a superlatively delicate nature and have, as I blushfully confess, for their object the charming flaxen-haired youth who occupies a furnished room at your house.

Said charming flaxen-haired youth passes frequently along the street on which I live, and on these occasions I have drunk in the sweet poison of his bewitching presence to my immeasurable pain.

I have tried to call his attention to my feelings.

I have laid my hand upon my heart and raised my eyes to heaven.

I have sighed, groaned, and wrung my hands.

Yes! I have played the fiddle and beat the drum to attract his attention.

But all to no purpose.

He treats my maidenly charms, which by the way are not to be sneezed at, with an indifference that coils itself like a boa constrictor around my wounded heart and cannot be removed except by forcible means.

Meanwhile Love eats me up by inches, and I can with mathematical exactness calculate the time when the last inch of my unhappy self will be consumed.

The thought is overwhelming, and causes a cold shudder to overcreep the still uneaten part of my ill-fated body.

Oh! I yearn for the love of this magnificent youth, and I must possess it or terminate an existence in which I am belabored by demons with nine-tailed Russian knouts.

Blank despair sits in my heart and threatens to jump at my throat; and on you alone it will depend whether I shall continue to live on this earth or emigrate to the realm of shadows.

I therefore appeal to your sisterly heart with the entreaty to inform that charming flaxen-

haired youth of my perilous state, and induce him by the power of your eloquence to return my love.

Proceed with energy and precision, and let your words be attended by some persuasive act.

A thrust in his ribs from your fair hand with some instrument—say a boot-jack—and his heart, oh glorious thought! will be mine—I shall be the happiest being on earth!

Expecting your speedy answer, I have the honor to sign as

Your love-stricken sister,
ROSINA SCHRAUBE.

To this letter Spottvogel received the following answer:

Berlin, February 16, 18—.

Mr. Julius Spottvogel,
alias Rosina Schraube,
Present.

My dearest Miss!

I regret to inform you that I failed to procure the desired balsam for your bleeding heart.

I have laid your case before that charming flaxen-haired youth in a manner befitting the occasion.

I have expatiated on your maidenly charms, the intensity of your love, and your sleepless days and nights. I have called his attention to the

dreadful responsibility that will fall upon him in case you should destroy your precious life—yes! I have locked him up in his room and through the keyhole of the door delivered to him a sermon so loud and eloquent, and pathetic that the walls began to tremble with emotion.

But all in vain!

The man has a heart of flint and laughs at your despair.

He positively refuses to return your love, and no boot-jack in the world is strong enough to break his obstinacy.

Under these circumstances there will remain no other way for you but to terminate your tortured life.

Should you be embarrassed about the means, I would respectfully advise you to swallow a telegraph pole or kick yourself to death.

Your affectionate sister,

AMANDA ROSENKRANZ.

It seemed that Langnas had learned of the correspondence, but he never lost a word about it.

He remained on bad terms with Spottvogel until at the end of his studies he returned to his native town.

HANS SCHNABELWITZ.

It is sad but true that there are men in this world who do not want to work.

Hans Schnabelwitz was one of them. He constantly cursed the man who invented human labor, asserting that he himself had been endowed by Nature with a lazy rib which like a fishbone extended from one end of his body to the other.

There was no reason to mistrust this assertion, as it was supported by ample proofs and, in fact, Schnabelwitz was too honest to burden his conscience with a falsehood.

He had finished the study of law, which, by the way, he had never commenced, and had been sent as assistant judge to a provincial town of Prussia.

Here he received, one day, the commission to ascertain the boundary lines of an estate which had been in litigation since the time of Emperor Charlemagne, and which in the last fifty years alone had worried out and killed a dozen assistant judges.

The prospect was refreshing, but Schnabelwitz went bravely to work—that is, he begged permission to dedicate himself to this important task in the stillness of his home. The permission was granted by the president of the court, who ordered to move the whole material of the lawsuit to the house of Schnabelwitz.

It consisted of ninety-five big folios, two hundred and ten voluminous documents, one hundred and forty-four parchment rolls, fifty-six maps with wooden rollers, and an infinite number of drawings, papers and letters; and Schnabelwitz found all this dusty stuff heaped up in his room when he returned home from a pleasant fishing trip.

It did not form a mountain or a simple sierra, but ran like a Cordillera through the room, making it dangerous to move about in it without mountain boots and alpenstock. And all this ballast Schnabelwitz had been ordered to examine in the course of two short months and lay his written report before the president.

He shuddered.

The task required an iron application and a load of patience, and Schnabelwitz had never heard of dealers who supplied such things to order or sold them ready made.

A sigh escaped his breast which found its echo

in a pile of documents, stirring up from them a cloud of dust.

Schnabelwitz waited until the dust had settled down and then made the attempt to climb over the Cordillera to a cupboard in the wall where he kept a refreshing drink composed of high-graded spirit, rum, and pepper—a drink which was used by him to neutralize the summer heat.

He passed the Cordillera without accident, but found to his dismay the cupboard buried under maps and parchment rolls so that it was no easy task to discover it and make it accessible to his thirsty throat.

His exertions were finally crowned with success. He drew out his bottle, refreshed himself from it by some deep draughts, then lighted a cigar, and sank into an arm-chair to rest from the heavy work.

Soon he fell asleep and did not awake before the sun had set.

For the boundary question it was now too late, and Schnabelwitz went to take his supper, after which he spent a couple of hours with his friends and then returned home to resume his sleep in bed.

Thus passed one day, thus passed a week and finally the whole two months after which the written report was to be delivered to the president.

Schnabelwitz was in despair. He raged, and this time called the inventor of labor a heartless brute.

It was not the first time that he had neglected his official duty, and his ignominious discharge appeared to him a certainty.

He therefore resolved to escape the disgrace by flight and try to make his living in another country.

He snatched up what he could carry of his things, took the train and passed the same night into Russia.

He had read in the papers that in the interior of that country German teachers were wanted; and so he extended his journey until he finally reached a small Russian town, in which he left the train and went to a hotel.

Here he counted over his money and found to his terror that it had melted down to a few kopecks.

Grim want stared him in the face and reminded him to go to work immediately.

He looked out of the window of his room and saw some finely dressed ladies and gentlemen pass along the street.

The opportunity seemed favorable and he hastened to offer them his services.

One gentleman especially appeared to him of

great benevolence, and him he approached with the modest question whether he would be pleased to engage a German teacher who was an adept in arts and sciences, and besides had found occasion to gather rich experiences in dusty boundary affairs.

The gentleman thus addressed listened to this harangue kindly, but then shook his head and replied some words in Russian which Schnabelwitz did not understand, whereupon the latter raised his hat and left him.

He continued his inquiries with other persons, but always with the same result, until he finally accosted an old gentleman, who, after hearing his question, asked him in German whether he knew the Russian language.

Poor Schnabelwitz was thunderstruck, for he had never thought of it that to teach the Russians German he had to learn from them their language first.

Indeed he saw that he had fallen into the same error which was committed by young Primrose when he wanted to teach English to the Dutch.

He now informed the gentleman of his embarrassing situation, whereupon the latter gave him the advice to enter the Russian army.

The idea pleased Schnabelwitz, and he gratefully accepted the gentleman's offer to introduce

him to the captain of a hussar squadron which was stationed at the town.

The captain received Schnabelwitz kindly; he spoke German and told him to come on the following morning to the barracks where he would receive him into his squadron.

Schnabelwitz was happy and returned to his hotel with a light heart.

In the afternoon, when he looked out of the window again, he saw the squadron of hussars ride to the drilling ground.

He followed them to see the drilling.

An officer commanded the squadron, and Schnabelwitz saw the men dismount and form in two long files.

Behind the files the corporals arranged themselves each armed with a formidable knout.

A command was given and the files began to advance followed by the corporals who then raised their knouts and let a shower of blows fall on the backs of the men.

This refreshing process was repeated after every command until finally a halt was made and the flogged and exhausted hussars were permitted to ride back to the barracks.

Schnabelwitz felt disgusted, for to blows he was not accustomed.

The very thought of them made him sick, and

he hastened back to the captain to inform him that under such circumstances he could not enlist.

The captain listened to him with a smile and said: "Fear nothing, my friend; well educated men like you receive no blows with us."

Schnabelwitz shook his head and answered promptly: "But who the devil shall see from behind whether the man is educated or not? They lay on their knouts without distinction and never mind the owner of the back."

At this the captain set up a hearty laugh and offered to take Schnabelwitz under his special protection, if he would enter his squadron.

Schnabelwitz accepted the offer, enlisted, and is to-day a famous general in the Russian army.

ALFRED BUCHFINK.

Alfred Buchfink was a private in the Battalion of Rifle Shooters at Berlin, Prussia.

He was gifted by Nature with a sound wit, and possessed the art to use it in the driest manner.

Besides, he was kind-hearted, obliging, and a good comrade; but he had one fault—he drank!

His intimate friend was a private of a similar stamp, named Rohrbeck, who used to second him in his many harmless jokes.

So it happened one day that Buchfink returned to the barracks drunk, and was reported by the corporal on guard.

The captain made him step forth at the roll-call, and said: "Buchfink, you have been drunk again."

"Zu Befehl, Herr Hauptmann"—"At your service, captain"—was the answer.

"You have again drunk beyond the thirst."

"Zu Befehl, Herr Hauptmann," followed the answer.

"I forbid you to go from the barracks to the city for the space of ten days."

"Zu Befehl, Herr Hauptmann," came the answer once more, and Buchfink stepped back to the ranks.

Now, to be confined to the barracks was not pleasant, especially for a native of Berlin like Buchfink, who had innumerable friends and acquaintances in the city.

Three days he had endured his arrest patiently, but on the fourth he sighed for liberty.

A horror seized him at the thought that he had still seven days of arrest before him, and he cursed the inventor of strong drink.

He execrated the corporal of the guard, the captain, and the whole Prussian army, and he bewailed that he had not been born a winged buchfink—chaffinch—that he might fly over the barrack roof to the city.

The furies of despair seized him finally, and he began earnestly to consider whether he should stab, shoot or drown himself in the washtub.

In the midst of these desperate reflections he was visited by his friend, Rohrbeck.

The latter brought the news that on Sunday a cockbeat was to take place in Rixdorf, a village near Berlin, and invited him to go with him and see it.

The thing was enticing, and the barrack arrest became an unendurable fetter.

Buchfink fought long with his sentiment of duty, but at last was conquered by temptation.

He consented to accompany his friend; and so, when Sunday came, sneaked out from the barracks and went with him to Rixdorf.

Arrived here, they walked to the Plaza, where the cockbeat was to take place.

They found a ring formed with a rope, in the midst of which stood a large earthen pot. At a table sat the prize judges, inviting volunteers to be blindfolded and then try to break the pot by hitting it with a club. To the successful pot-breaker a fat rooster was held out as a prize.

Our two privates entered into consultation and resolved that Rohrbeck should go and be blindfolded and that Buchfink was to direct his motions by French words, which the Rixdorf peasants would not understand.

To play this deception was wrong, but our privates failed to think of that, as many people sometimes do.

So Rohrbeck was blindfolded and a club given into his hand. He was turned around a number of times by one of the prize judges, and then told to go and break the pot.

Immediately the French signals followed which had been so arranged that at the word "coup" the blow was to be struck.

Everything went as desired, and success seemed sure.

Then it happens that Buchfink sees a peasant near the ring who, with his mouth wide open, stands staring at the game.

This is a fine opportunity for a capital joke, and Buchfink resolves to improve it.

He at once directs his friend to the spot where the peasant stands, and when Rohrbeck, with uplifted club, is standing in front of him, he gives the signal—"coup!"

A terrible blow falls and the peasant drops to the ground.

The thing looks dangerous, but no damage has been done. The peasant has evaded the blow and dropped down from fright.

Nevertheless, some of the peasants present demand the striker to leave the ring. The judges decide against it, and the play goes on.

A short time after he breaks the pot and receives a rooster, which Buchfink takes and shoves under his arm.

After that, both take the road to Berlin, where they intend to sell the bird and have a jolly time.

They pass up Dresden street, unobserved, but scarcely have they turned into Old Jacob street, when, to their dismay, their captain happens to meet them.

They step aside and make front before him. He does not pass, but stops and looks at Buchfink, who, with the rooster under his arm, stands in a stiff, soldierly attitude before him.

In that moment the captain remembers that he has given him ten days' barracks arrest, and says: "Undutiful soldier, how can you dare to show yourself here and in such unsoldierly state! Don't you know that you have barracks arrest?"

Buchfink assumes an humble mien and replies: "Captain, you did not give me barracks arrest. I beg you will remember that you only forbade me to go from the barracks to the city. I have not violated this order, for, as my comrade Rohrbeck here, can testify, I went with him from the barracks to Rixdorf, and it is from Rixdorf that I come to the city."

The captain finds it difficult to remain earnest; he turns abruptly around and goes away.

The two soldiers then sell their rooster and return to the barracks in a jolly mood.

On the next day Buchfink is summoned before the captain, who gives him a severe reprimand, but cannot help laughing when Buchfink relates to him the incident with the Rixdorf peasant.

THE WHITE CALF.

The kingdom of Prussia possesses to-day one of the finest railroad nets in the world, and besides is crossed by innumerable macadamized roads.

This was not the case one hundred and twenty years ago.

In those times that country was traversed by three or four principal thoroughfares and a multitude of smaller roads, all of which became impassable in rainy weather, and often compelled the hapless traveler to put up for days, and even weeks, at one of those dingy inns which lined the roads and were often kept by men who were professional thieves and murderers.

Thus it happened one stormy night in September, 1772, that a gentleman and his wife traveled along the grand road which led from Berlin to Koenigsberg, and had to seek shelter at an inn kept by Stephen Kalb, a man some sixty years of age and a consummate rascal.

The gentleman was a preacher, and on the way to take his young wife to their future home in a

village of Pomerania, where he had his congregation.

He was a handsome man of thirty-two, and had married his wife, a charming brunette of eighteen, a week before.

As a general rule, preachers were poor in those days; but the young man had managed to economize, and on the present occasion carried a purse which contained some forty silver dollars.

This was a small sum, but sufficient to arouse the cupidity of Stephen Kalb, who had seen the purse and its contents when the preacher gave a coin to the boy that brought him to the inn.

Besides, there were the buggy and horse, a silver watch, and the wedding rings of the newly married couple which he wished to have. Altogether, he calculated that he could gain a hundred and fifty dollars by the murder of his guests, who were strangers in that section of the country.

Telegraphs were unknown then, while mails were rare; and the boy who had brought the guests to the inn was a poor orphan whom the landlord had adopted for the purpose of hunting up travelers and bringing them to the inn.

Besides this boy there was but an old servant woman to do the housework, and as she was deaf and an imbecile, the landlord ran no danger of being betrayed by her.

Both the preacher and his wife were tired when they arrived, and were led by the landlord to a chamber with a double bed.

They retired immediately, but had not slept long when they were awakened by their host, who, with a lantern in one hand and an axe in the other, entered the room.

There was murder in his eyes, and the young man saw it. He sprang out from the bed to grapple with the man, but in the same moment received an axe blow on the head which felled him to the floor.

In the next moment his young wife was killed by the fiend, and then the latter went to take the ring from her finger.

While he was thus engaged, the preacher, who had been stunned, but not killed by the blow, opened his mouth and said: "You have killed my innocent wife and mortally wounded me. Now hear what I have to say. Your name is Kalb—calf—and as a calf you shall wander restless day and night until you have atoned for this foul deed and all the other crimes which you committed for base gain."

The murderer received these words with a mocking laughter, and went to strike the preacher another blow, but found that he was dead. He then

removed the bodies from the house and buried them at the slope of a hill not far from the inn.

All these actions had been observed by the boy without the murderer's knowledge, but he feared his master too much to betray him.

Some time after, Stephen Kalb was killed by a falling tree, and then the boy told what he had seen and heard.

Eighty years had passed since the death of Stephen Kalb, when a young law student by the name of Robert Meyer happened to be employed at a Court of Justice in a town three miles from the old inn.

He was a great pedestrian and passed his leisure hours in rambling over the country.

In his ramblings he was accompanied by a little spaniel which was so much attached to him that he never left him by day or night. Only one place was there where the dog would not follow, and this was the hill where Stephen Kalb had buried the preacher and his wife.

The dog would accompany his master as far as the foot of the hill, but nothing could induce him to go any farther.

A footpath branched off from the common road, led over the hill, and then followed its slope down to a little brook with stepping stones for a cross-

ing. The footpath then ascended the steep side of another hill and took its course to the residence of Mr. Charles Bender, a retired business man.

The old house in which Stephen Kalb had kept his inn did still exist. It stood within a clump of oak trees, and had not been occupied since his sudden death.

It was decayed now, and people kept away from it, telling strange stories about it, and its former owner.

Mr. Meyer had heard these stories, but did not believe them. Still, prompted by curiosity, he resolved to explore the house and its surrounding grounds.

So he selected one fine summer evening, and in company with his little spaniel, took his way to the clump of trees among which the old house stood.

He found it to be a large one-story stone building, with its door and window shutters closed, and standing in the middle of a yard, in which a stable building lay in ruins.

The yard was overgrown with weeds and shrubs, and inclosed by a stone wall whose worm-eaten entrance door was hanging on one hinge.

Mr. Meyer entered the yard and went up to the house. He tried the front door and found it bolted from within. The wood frame, which held the bolt, was rotten, and he made an effort to break

it. He stemmed his feet against the door-sill and gave the door a jerk.

This was no sooner done, when there was a loud noise in the house, as of some four-footed animal tramping along the hall; and in the next moment, a yell was uttered within so unearthly and loud that Mr. Meyer left the door in terror.

Still he was a brave young man, and wanted to sift the matter to the bottom.

The noise had now stopped, and he went to the door again. There was a hole in it and he looked through it into the hall.

He saw another door on the far end of the hall, which was shut, but admitted sufficient light to see the inside of the hall.

There were the open doors of three rooms on each side, but the hall was empty and nothing to be seen in it.

This was strange, and Mr. Meyer walked around the house to try the other door.

But scarcely had he put his hand to it, when he was disturbed by another tramping noise in the hall and a yell so terrible and threatening, that he shrank back from the door a step or two.

Now, any other youth would have left the ground and run home to his mother, but not so Mr. Meyer.

He stepped up to the door again, put his eyes to a hole and looked through it into the hall.

While he did so, a four-footed animal of a grayish color rushed furiously out from a room and approached the door with a pair of eyes that shone like fire.

This time Mr. Meyer did not stop to see more. Twilight had set in, and he left the house and yard.

When he reached the open field, he whistled for his dog, but he was gone. He found him sitting and awaiting him before his room in town.

Mr. Meyer did not speak of these events, but some time after learned from an old gentleman that a white calf was haunting the vicinity of the town.

This ghostly calf had been seen for more than seventy years on the hills and roads around the old deserted inn, and had become a perfect nuisance, so that nobody dared to pass there in the dark. It had no special hours for its appearance, and sometimes had been seen by people in the day-time. There was a story connected with it; and here the gentleman related to Mr. Meyer the story of Stephen Kalb, the preacher and his wife.

Nothing more had happened for several years, when one day Mr. Meyer became acquainted with

Mr. Bender, the retired business man, who lived on the hill not far from the old inn.

He was a bachelor and fond of company, and so he invited Mr. Meyer to extend his pedestrian wanderings to his house and have a game of chess with him.

The invitation was tendered with so much cordiality, that Mr. Meyer accepted it with pleasure and soon became a constant visitor at Mr. Bender's house.

There was a carriage road leading around the hills to Mr. Bender's house, but as it was very sandy and considerably longer than the footpath over the hills, Mr. Meyer chose the latter when walking out to Mr. Bender.

Strange to say, he could never prevail on his dog to accompany him over the hills.

The dog would follow him to the place where the footpath branched off, and then regularly turn round and run back to town.

Meanwhile, the white calf had again been met by several persons, and among them, by a young soldier, who walking along the carriage road at dusk, had been accompanied by it for two miles until he reached the door of his father's house.

Mr. Meyer heard of this, but continued his visits at Mr. Bender's, frequently staying there for supper and playing chess up to twelve o'clock at

night, when he took his lonely walk over the hills and reached the town without ever meeting the white calf.

It seemed indeed, as if the calf avoided him until one day he and a colleague of his received Mr. Bender's invitation to an evening party at his house.

This colleague was a young man, who had arrived a couple of days before, and was a stranger in those parts.

Mr. Meyer took him over the hills to Mr. Bender's house where they had a nice time until it grew late, and the party broke up.

It was half past twelve when Mr. Meyer and his colleague left Mr. Bender's house, and took the footpath over the hills.

The sky was clear and the country lighted by the full moon; and as the hills were bare of trees and vegetation, our young men could see every object that presented itself for miles around. There was not a breath of wind and the greatest quiet reigned.

It was warm, and the young men had taken off their hats, carrying them in their hands while they walked along.

They were conversing, and laughing at some funny things which had happened at Mr. Ben-

der's party; and they spoke of some pretty girls with whom they had been dancing.

In this happy mood, they had descended the steep side of the hill, crossed the brook and were now ascending the gentle slope of the other hill, when all at once they were startled by a yell, such as Mr. Meyer had heard in the hall of the inn, but louder and more prolonged—in short, a yell that made them stop and look about in horror.

There was something in that yell which could not be compared to any earthly voice; it resembled the shriek of a man in agony and the roar of an infuriated beast, and yet seemed neither of the two.

Our pedestrians soon found that the yell proceeded from an object some fifty yards from them, which, whirling round with fearful velocity, uttered those unearthly sounds, and then, on a sudden, ceased its whirl and yell and stood stock still, presenting to the eyes of the young men a side view of its form.

It was a quadruped and stood close to the footpath which they had to follow.

It was of a grayish-white color and resembled indeed, a full-grown calf.

Its eyes were not visible, but its head, feet and tail could be clearly seen.

By its attitude it appeared to meditate on some

new mischief; and so it was the case, for in the next moment it began its whirl again, and with a long, ear-piercing shriek disappeared from the spot.

But this was not all, for in the very moment of its disappearance Mr. Meyer's companion fell back and cried in a voice trembling with terror and fear: "It flew right over my head and touched it! Look at my hair!"

Mr. Meyer looked and found the hair of his companion disarranged and literally standing on end.

The thing appeared dangerous, for there is no possible defense against ghosts.

Then the young man positively refused to proceed any farther, and this for the reason that the footpath was to lead them to the very spot where the unearthly thing had performed its gruesome pranks. He wished to return and pass the night at Mr. Bender's.

To this Mr. Meyer objected, calling his friend's attention to the fact that the ghost or whatever it was, had taken its flight in the direction of Mr. Bender's house; and that it might hover on the hill beyond the brook now, and swoop down upon them as soon as they attempted to ascend the hill.

The argument was convincing and they proceeded on their way.

When they reached the place where the white calf had stood, Mr. Meyer stopped to look for traces, but was violently clutched and dragged away by his colleague, who did not relax his hold on him till they had passed the hill and entered the common road.

Here the young man's fear seemed to leave him, and he began to breathe more freely.

He even became brave and tried to laugh at the affair, declaring that it had been nothing but a funny delusion.

He expatiated on delusions in general, illustrating the subject with scientific proofs, and became quite eloquent while ridiculing the vulgar belief in ghosts.

But his rhetoric was doomed to suffer a cruel interruption.

He was cut short in it by the ghost, who seemed to think it time to silence him.

The young man had just raised his arm to give his arguments additional force, when he uttered a piercing shriek and cried piteously: "Here it is again close by me! Look at it! It has pinched me in the leg and yelled right into my ear! Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?"

After these words, he nearly fainted, but was caught in the strong arms of Mr Meyer, who pos-

itively asserts that this time he had neither heard nor seen the ghost.

It was with difficulty that Mr. Meyer succeeded in getting his friend to town, where he put him to bed and stayed the night with him.

Why the white calf should have found pleasure in playing its pranks on that scientific youth and let Mr Meyer go out free, is a question which only a ghost is competent to answer, and so we shall not dwell on it.

As we have stated before, Mr. Meyer was a brave young man, and only a day or two had passed when he walked out to Mr. Bender, to tell him what had happened.

The news had reached there before him; and Mr. Bender had entertained the fear that the white calf might have frightened his young friends away from him forever.

But this was not the case with Mr. Meyer, who declared that he was not afraid of ghosts, but rather liked them, and that he would visit him as before.

And so he did.

Still we feel bound to say that the first night when he passed over the hills again, and came to the spot where the white calf had performed its

giddy whirl, his hair stood on end, although he stoutly denies it.

Strange to say, he never met the calf again.

That it was still in existence, and took a cruel delight in frightening people, was conclusively proved some months after, when a gentleman was driving along the road in his carriage.

He had been invited to a baptism at the house of his brother who lived in that vicinity, and the hour was late when he left for home.

He was alone and drove the carriage himself.

He had crossed the bridge which spanned the brook and reached the place where the footpath led off to the hills, when he saw what he judged to be a big white dog.

He whistled and the animal came running up to him.

As soon as it was near the carriage, the horses became frightened and ran away. But this did not prevent the apparent dog from remaining close by the side of the carriage.

The gentleman looked at him more closely and now saw that it was not a dog but a big white calf with eyes that gleamed like fire.

When the carriage reached the town, the calf disappeared and the gentleman succeeded in stopping the horses.

Since then more than forty years have passed away, and many are the people by whom the white calf has been seen in the course of this time.

A letter from Mr. Meyer, who still lives in those parts, says that he himself saw it but recently in the yard of that old inn, which still exists and is shunned as much now as it was a hundred years ago.

A DANCING GHOST.

It was six o'clock P. M., and the passenger train of the Mexican National Railroad stood before the depot in Laredo, Texas, ready to depart for the city of Mexico.

There were few passengers, and of them three gentlemen entered a coach in which there were no ladies. They took their seats together in one compartment, lighted cigars, and were soon engaged in a lively conversation.

Of the gentlemen, one was a middle-aged American betraying the daring spirit of his country, while the other two were elderly Mexicans of the better class.

The train soon began to move, crossed the Rio Grande and entered the desert-like country, which here for miles presents itself to the eye.

Our travelers took no notice of it until the American chancing to look out of the window, called the attention of his companions to a single rock by the wayside, exclaiming loudly: "Look, gentlemen, there stands the ghost of my early life!"

Both looked out and were struck with the sin-

gular appearance of the rock, which, standing among some shrubs, in the uncertain light of the moon, bore the figure of a man in winding sheets. It was but a single glimpse they caught, for in the next moment, the train had passed the rock; but all agreed that the likeness could not have been more striking.

"And why did you call that rock the ghost of your early life?" asked one of the Mexicans, turning to the American.

The latter smiled, lighted another cigar, and then settling back on his seat, spoke as follows:

"Gentlemen, there are more things in this world than the wisest of us can fathom. We all are born, live and die on this earth, but what will become of us after death, nobody can tell. On one important point alone intelligent men seem to hold the same belief, and this is the immortality of the spirit with which we are endowed. Still what shape this spirit will assume after our death and to what place it will ge, is as much a mystery now as it has been through all the ages before.

There are persons who deny the existence of a spirit life, but let them encounter a real ghost as I have done, and you will see them run for their lives.

Now the ghost which came to show itself to

me had the exact appearance of the white rock we passed before, but it could move and grin and tear the blankets from me with which I was covered in bed.

It was a mean ghost, for it seemed to take delight in exposing a poor little boy to the biting cold of a winter night in the garret of an old decayed house.

It was like the dog in the manger, for when it had taken my blankets from me, it did not use them to cover itself with them, as a thinly clad ghost should have done, but flung them on the floor and stood and danced on them with a malicious grin on its face.

I must tell you, gentlemen, that I am the son of very poor parents, who died some forty years ago in a town of Illinois, and left me to the mercy of the world.

I was but ten years old when they died; and having neither kindred nor friends, I was taken care of by a grocery man who kept his store in that old house.

He was a miser and a cruel man, and used to beat me unmercifully.

In the daytime he employed me to sweep the grocery store and do all kinds of dirty work, giving me as little to eat as he possibly could to keep my bones together; and at night he consigned me

to the garret above the store, where an old, broken bedstead with a straw mattress, a straw pillow and a couple of torn horse blankets had been placed to serve me as a bed.

A rickety staircase led up to the garret, in which all the empty barrels, boxes and cans were stored, and numberless rats and mice roamed about, making the nights hideous with their incessant noise.

Still, all this I bore, for in the end I got used to it; and you know, gentlemen, that a boy of tender age who is kept at work from morning till night, will sleep in almost any place.

It was winter; and as the nights were very cold, it was my custom to creep under the blankets and leave nothing but my mouth and nose uncovered.

I had done so for months and enjoyed a tolerable rest, when one night I felt an icy-cold hand insert itself between the blankets and my body.

I rose in bed and saw by the light of the moon the figure of a man rolled up in winding sheets standing by the bedside and tearing at my blankets. It had the ghastly face of a corpse, but eyes that gleamed like fire, and its big mouth showed a malicious grin.

My first impulse was to scream for help, but knowing that there was no other living person

at the house, I gave this up and fell trembling back on my pillow.

The ghastly man then tore the blankets from me, flung them on the floor, and began to dance on them, throwing his legs high up in the air and beating time with his hands, while his winding sheets were flapping about him like wings.

All this he performed without the slightest noise or sound, until at length he seemed exhausted and stopped.

He then stepped down from the blankets, turned his face to me, and with a mocking grin sank slowly through the solid floor without leaving a trace of him. I shivered with cold and fear, but soon conquered the fear and went for my blankets, which I took up and flung around me. After that I returned to the bed, lay down on it, and soon fell fast asleep.

I was awakened by the smarting blows of a whip, and when I opened my eyes, I saw the grocer standing by the bedside, beating and scolding me vociferously for sleeping so long and leaving the store unswept.

I cried and told him that I had been visited by a ghost, but he would not believe me, and threatened to kill me if I should dare to tell such lies again.

It was broad daylight now, and the sun shone

through the window on the spot where the ghost had performed his gruesome dance.

Fearing the grocer's whip, I did not tell the thing to anyone, and when night came on, crept back to my bed as usual.

Here I lay awake for a long time thinking of the ghost and trying to persuade myself that the whole occurrence had been a dream, and that I had acted foolishly to believe in a real ghost.

With such thoughts I finally fell asleep, but I had not slept long when I was awakened by the same cold hand again. I looked up, and there stood the ghost grinning and tugging at my blankets. In the next moment he had torn them away from me and thrown them on the floor, where he performed his dances and then disappeared as he had done the night before.

This time there was no doubt that I had seen a real ghost. I took up my blankets and passed the rest of the night thinking and forming the resolution that I would tell the grocer of the occurrence and run away from him, if he should beat me again.

So when daylight came I went down to sweep the store, and then crossed over to the grocer's house to receive my scanty breakfast. He soon appeared and asked me in a scoffing voice whether I had seen the ghost again.

I told him that I had, when he took up his whip and began to beat me cruelly.

My cries aroused the neighborhood, and the Judge, who lived next door to him, came in and rescued me from the hands of the brutal man.

The blood trickled from my face, which the man had hit with his whip; but I had the satisfaction of seeing him thrown on the floor and kicked by the indignant Judge.

Then the latter took me by the hand and said: "Come with me, my son; you shall not remain another minute with this infernal rascal. This is not the first time that I have observed his fiendish cruelty to you, and I will tolerate it no longer."

The grocer did not speak a word in reply, but rose from the floor and sneaked from the room.

Soon after we entered the Judge's house and were met by his lady, to whom he presented me, with the words: "See here, Mary, I have brought you this poor child to take care of him. We will treat him as it becomes good Christian folks, and try to make a useful man of him."

And so they did. They had no children, and treated me like a son. Although they lived in moderate circumstances, they sent me to a private school and later to college.

I studied law, became a prosperous man and

found occasion to repay my benefactors for their kindness. They are dead now, and will receive their full reward in a better world.

As to the grocer, I observe that shortly after I had left him, the old house in which he kept his grocery was struck by lightning and burned down to the ground.

Perhaps the ghost was burned with it, for I have never seen him since."

AN OBLIGING GHOST.

Dear reader, if you ever come to San Luis Potosi, in Mexico, and possess sufficient curiosity, you should go and look up an old house, which, on account of the uncanny things that are said to happen in it, is most of the time without tenants.

The house is situated on Comonfort street, not far from the Plaza de las Recojidas. It is a one-story building, with a single window looking on the street, and a high stone wall by its side which contains the entrance door.

If you want to see the inside of the house you have to pass through this door and enter the paved yard. There is a wash-house and a well at the lower end of the yard, and a stone wall, with a door in it, that leads into a small back-yard, in which stands a little three-story building containing a horse-stable, a single room above it and a kiosk that forms the third story.

The house, which faces the street, has three rooms running in a line, with doors that open

into the yard, and connects with a kitchen building behind.

There are three old trees in the yard—one an eucalyptus, standing by the entrance door of the street wall, and the others, fig trees, standing before the doors of the first and second rooms. They are shady and afford a delicious coolness to the rooms. In short, the house, being located near the center of the city, is one of the nicest residences that a man of moderate means can desire.

This was the impression of Mr. Charles Smith, an old California mining engineer, when in passing along Comonfort street one fine summer morning he looked through the open door into the spacious yard and saw the leafy trees. He wanted to rent a house, and had found here just what he wanted, for the house was empty and seemed to be to let.

There was a man in the yard, and Mr. Smith stepped in.

"Look here, my friend, is this house for rent?" spoke Mr. Smith.

"I think it is, if there is anybody who wants to live in it," answered the man.

"Well, I want to live in it," said Mr. Smith.

"You do, indeed? Then go and look at the rooms," replied the man, picking up a fig from the ground and putting it into his mouth.

"Foolish people, these Mexicans!" murmured Mr. Smith, and walked into the front room of the house.

He found it spacious and connected with the middle room by a glass door. The third room and the kitchen were spacious, too, and so was the room of the three-story building in the back-yard.

Mr. Smith congratulated himself on having found such a pleasant house, and asked the man where he could find its owner.

"And so you intend to live in this house?" asked the man, with a wondering gaze.

"Of course I do; where is the owner?" asked Mr. Smith, impatiently.

The man pointed to a grocery store not far from there and gave the name of the owner.

"This man is a born fool," thought Mr. Smith, and took his way to the store.

He found a little gray-haired man behind the counter, who at Mr. Smith's inquiry declared he was the owner of the empty house.

"And you wish to live in that house, sir?" asked he.

"So I do; what is the rent?" said Mr. Smith.

"The rent is sixteen dollars a month, payable monthly in advance," answered the man, with a grin.

"Well, here is the rent for the first month," said Mr. Smith, placing sixteen dollars on the counter; "may I move in to-day?"

"So you may, sir," said the grocer, taking up the money and putting it into the drawer.

Mr. Smith had bought an interest in a Mexican silver mine, and come to stay in San Luis with his son, a boy of twenty-two. They had found living in a hotel inconvenient, and therefore resolved to rent a small house and take their meals at a restaurant.

So in the course of the day they bought the necessary furniture and at night found themselves comfortably seated under the leafy trees of the yard.

"Well, Willie," said the old man, "I think I struck it rich in finding this nice place, and you may now have your choice of sleeping in the front or middle room."

"I take the middle room, then, father," replied the young man.

"All right, but now let us go to bed, for the hour is late," said Mr. Smith, and both retired.

In the morning Mr. Smith asked his son:

"Well, Willie, how did you sleep?"

"I slept very little, for there was somebody in my room who constantly pulled at my pillow," answered the young man.

"Oh, pshaw!" said Mr. Smith; "you are too big a boy to believe in ghosts, are you not?"

"I know I am, and I do not want to believe in them, but the thing was exceedingly strange. I was rather tired when I went to bed last night and fell asleep at once. How long I had been sleeping I cannot tell, when I was awakened by the tread of horses and the rattle of a coach, which, coming along the yard, stopped in front of my room. I then heard somebody spring down from the box to open the door of the coach, and a man in heavy boots stepped from it and walked directly into my room, the door of which was open.

"It was pitch dark and I could not see anything. I therefore got up, lighted a match and looked about.

"There was the dark yard, with its trees, and there was the locked entrance door in the street wall, but neither horses, coach, nor men were to be seen, nor was there anybody in my room.

"To be sure that nobody could enter the room again I closed its door and locked it. After that

I went to bed again, but I had no sooner lain down when I felt a hand moving and tugging at my pillow. I lighted another match and examined the pillow, but there was nothing on or under it that I could see.

"After a while the tugging ceased, when I fell asleep, and was not disturbed again."

Mr. Smith shook his head, saying that this was nothing but a dream, and there the matter rested.

Both father and son then went out to take their breakfast, after which Willie left the city to go to the mine, while his father went to hire a man who would keep the house and yard in order.

He found one and took him to the house, where they sat down under the trees in the yard to talk the matter over.

While they were thus seated their conversation was interrupted by a heavy tread and mocking laughter in the middle room of the house whose door was open.

Mr. Smith sprang up to see who it was, but there was nobody in the room, nor was there anybody to be found in the other rooms.

Thinking that he must have been mistaken, he put the man to work and went out to see a friend. He returned home after dinner, and sat down under the trees to read the paper. Nothing more

happened during the day, and when night came on he sent the man to sleep in the kitchen, while he closed the shutters of the window in the front room, and then went to bed, leaving the door of his room ajar.

Mr. Smith had not slept long when he was awakened by the tramp of horses and the noise of a carriage rolling along the yard and stopping before his door. A dozen persons had entered with it, who seemed to have a quarrel and a fight. There were blows, screams and vociferations until at length the heavy tread of a man was heard to enter the room and approach the window.

In the next moment the window shutters, which had been fastened by a clamp, flew open with a bang, and Mr. Smith saw the lighted street before him. Then all became still.

Of course the thing was strange, and so Mr. Smith sprang up from his bed, lighted a candle and looked about.

He found the window shutters open, still there was no trace of living beings in the room or yard.

He then went to bed again, but slept very little during the rest of the night, although there was no more disturbance.

In the morning he asked the hired man how

he had slept, who answered, "Thank you, sir, I slept very well."

Mr. Smith told the man nothing, but waited for his son, who arrived in the course of the day, and to whom he related all that had occurred,

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Both Mr. Smith and his son were fearless men, and they resolved to remain at the house and see what would happen next.

They did not mention the matter to anyone, but learned that the house had been occupied by innumerable tenants, all of whom had left after staying in it a day or two.

Strange as it may appear, our heroes were not troubled again for several months; and they began to think that their experiences at the house had been imaginary, when one dark night the window shutters in the front room were violently torn open again.

But this was not all, for from that time forward both Mr. Smith and his son heard every night the coach rattle and stop in the yard and someone enter their rooms, who then amused himself with tugging at their pillows.

The old man grew angry and resolved to remonstrate with his nightly visitor; and so when

the latter came again and commenced pulling at his pillow, he said:

"Look here, my friend, I want you to stop this d——d nonsense of yours, and let me sleep. I am a decent man, and have always treated my fellow creatures fairly. Besides, I pay rent for this house, which I am sure you never do. If, therefore, you must disturb someone in his sleep, go to another place and select a man who is a gambler, a cheat, a libertine or something worse.

"By the way, are you acquainted in New York? There are some greedy men in that city who are not satisfied with having each a hundred million dollars. They want the earth and need a thorough shaking up by some respectable ghost, which I hope you are.

"Go to their residences, then, and take all your fellow ghosts with you.

"Go at once and don't spare those fellows, but give it to them good; and after that come here and tell me how they liked it.

"Will you go? Then say so or show it by some token."

Instantly there was a heavy pull at the pillow, after which the pulling ceased entirely.

Mr. Smith then passed the rest of the night without molestation, and so did his son.

On the following night at precisely eleven o'clock the ghost pulled at the pillow.

Mr. Smith had expected him and received him with the words: "Well, Mr. Ghost, you are punctual. Now, tell me, did you go and give those plutocrats a shaking?"

An affirmative pull was the answer.

"Can you tell me the names of the men you shook?" asked Mr. Smith.

The ghost kept silent and did not pull.

"I see you cannot speak," said Mr. Smith, "but can you write?"

The ghost gave an affirmative pull.

"Oh, this is splendid," cried Mr. Smith.

"There is a sheet of paper and a pencil on the table. Go, Mr. Ghost, and put down the names of the men to whom you gave a shaking up."

A lamp was burning on the table, and Mr. Smith saw from his bed an invisible hand take up the pencil and write on the paper, after which it stopped and laid the pencil down.

Mr. Smith now rushed to the table and found the names of half-a-dozen multi-millionaires plainly written on the paper.

He was delighted and cheered the ghosts, all of whom now seemed to have come in, by crying: "Vivan los espectros" (The ghosts shall live).

After that night neither he nor his son were ever troubled by ghosts, and they lived in that old house until some time ago, when they sold their interest in the mine and left San Luis Potosi.

THE END.

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